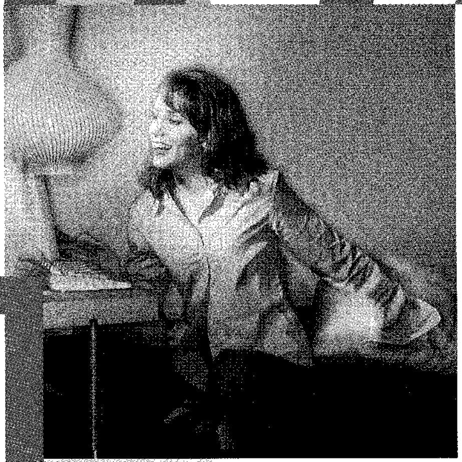
Price $3.00

THE
NEW YOR

Aug. 3, 1998

Microsoft® Windows® 98 radically accelerates your access to your favorite applications. It does this by figuring out what programs you use most and rearranging them at a tiny micro level to be quicker and more efficient.

“YEAH, YEAH BUT IS IT FA



98

Works better. Plays better.

©1998 Microsoft Corporation. All rights reserved. Microsoft, Where do you want to go today?, Windows and the Windows logo are either registered trademarks or trademarks of Microsoft Corporation in the United States and/or other countries. *Source: NSTL 4/98. Results based on differences in application load times on identical hardware systems running Windows 98 versus Windows 95.

ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

YEAH,
STER?" you say.

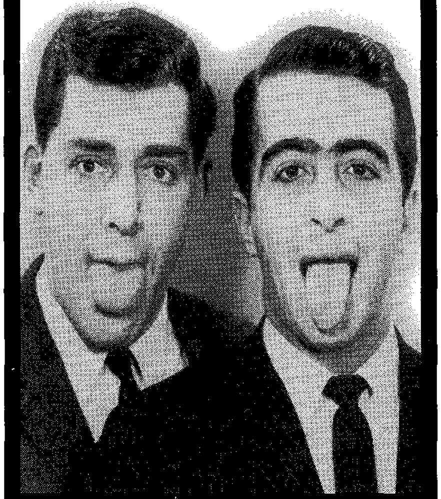
Well, yes. An average of 36%* faster, now that you mention it. You know, you should relax a little and read at a more leisurely pace. Let your operating system do the hurrying.

Where do you want to go today?®

Microsoft®

www.microsoft.com/windows98/

Have a taste for good books?



You'll enjoy our free catalog.

The Daedalus Books Catalog is famous among people who consume a lot of books. It's full of meaty mini-reviews that make good reading in and of themselves. It's enlightening. Entertaining. And it's free.

In it you'll discover books you absolutely must have. So you'll be happy to find they're less than half the list price. Almost every Daedalus book is a remainder – a publisher's surplus in your favor.

Won't it be nice to devour all the fine books you hunger for? Just tell us where to send your free catalog.

DAEDALUS
BOOKS CATALOG
1-800-395-2665
http://www.daedalus-books.com

THE NEW YORKER

AUGUST 3, 1998

COMMENT Novels We Love . . . . . *Louis Menand* 4
The listing of American culture.

THE MAIL 7

GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN 8

THE TALK OF THE TOWN 25
Points of departure.

DEPARTMENTS

Annals of Broadcasting The People's Network . . . . . *Peter J. Boyer* 28
CNN began as an unglamorous, no-frills news organization. Is the Operation Tailwind fiasco a sign that it's become something else entirely?

Personal History No Taste for Accounting . . . . . *Cynthia Ozick* 34
After graduate school, the author was armed with a critical mind and lofty ambitions. And then she took a summer job.

Paris Journal Saving the Balzar . . . . . *Adam Gopnik* 39
As corporate ownership overtakes a venerable and cherished brasserie, the patrons revolt.

LIFE AND LETTERS The Enigma of Friendship . . . . . *Paul Theroux* 44
For thirty years, V. S. Naipaul was the author's mentor and confidant. What went wrong?

FICTION "Communist" . . . . . *Philip Roth* 56
Henry Wallace, the Progressive Party, and the uncompromising Reds of Newark.

THE CRITICS

Books "Bridget Jones" and the marriage mystique . . . . . *Daphne Merkin* 70
At the Ateliers Milan and Paris . . . . . *Michael Roberts* 72
Books Briefly Noted 76
The Current Cinema Steven Spielberg's "Saving Private Ryan" . . . *Anthony Lane* 77

POEMS

"The Cloister" . . . . . *William Matthews* 40
"Devotion" . . . . . *Daniel Hoffman* 58

CROSSWORD 8 x 10 Cryptic No. 53 79

SHOUTS & MURMURS Diplomatic Impunity . . . . . *Bruce McCall* 80

COVER *Higher Calling, by Carter Goodrich*

DRAWINGS *Bruce Eric Kaplan, Danny Shanahan, Mick Stevens, Charles Barsotti, Leo Cullum, Michael Maslin, P. C. Vey, Arnie Levin, Victoria Roberts, Robert Weber, Frank Cotham, Michael Crawford, Peter Steiner, Robert Mankoff, Jack Ziegler, Barbara Smaller*

THE NEW YORKER (ISSN 0028-792X), published weekly (except for seven combined issues: Feb. 23 & Mar. 2, Apr. 27 & May 4, June 22 & 29, Aug. 24 & 31, Oct. 19 & 26, Dec. 14 & 21, Dec. 28 & Jan. 4) by The New Yorker Magazine, Inc., 20 W. 43rd St., N.Y., N.Y. 10036. Vol. LXXIV, No. 22, August 3, 1998. Periodical postage paid at New York, N.Y., and at additional mailing offices. Authorized as second-class mail by the Post Office Department, Ottawa, Canada, and for payment of postage in cash. Canadian Publication Mail Sales Product Agreement No.190969. Canadian goods-and-services-tax registration number R123242885. Registered as a newspaper at the British Post Office. Subscription rates: In U.S. and possessions, one year, $39.95; two years, $72.00. In Canada, one year, $83.00 (includes GST and HST where applicable). In Germany, one year, DM290. Mail orders to: IP Internationale Presse, Distribution & Marketing GmbH, Waldstr. 70, D-63128 Dietzenbach, Germany. Other foreign subscriptions, one year, $91.00, payable in advance.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to The New Yorker, Box 56447, Boulder, Colorado 80328-6447. PRINTED IN U.S.A.

In a past life I was a great lover. I left not a heart unbroken in all of Spain or France, or Italy. But Greece, ahh, my apologies to the ladies of Greece. A man does not stay eighteen forever.

Once I was a tightrope walker. I sneezed.

In a past life I was pure, glacial spring water.

FINLANDIA
VODKA
IMPORTED

Enjoy Finlandia responsibly.
Finlandia Vodka 40% ALC./VOL., Imported by Brown-Forman Beverages Worldwide, Louisville, KY ©1998 ALKO GROUP LTD.

NEW FROM SONY CLASSICAL

HEAR THE FANTASY

JOSHUA BELL
GERSHWIN FANTASY
JOHN WILLIAMS
CONDUCTOR AND PIANIST
LONDON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

JOSHUA BELL
GERSHWIN FANTASY
PORGY AND BESS
VIOLIN FANTASY
SONGS AND PRELUDES
JOHN WILLIAMS
LONDON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA
SK 60659

FEATURING

FANTASY FOR VIOLIN AND ORCHESTRA
ON PORGY AND BESS
(world premiere recording)

SONGS FOR VIOLIN AND ORCHESTRA:
*I Got Rhythm, Liza, Embraceable You,
Love Is Here To Stay, Sweet And Low-Down
(with George Gershwin piano roll),
Nice Work If You Can Get It, But Not For Me*

THREE PRELUDES
(Heifetz transcription for violin and piano)

"BELL'S INSATIABLY PASSIONATE VIOLIN PLAYING, ALWAYS SEARCHING RATHER THAN SENTIMENTAL, IS AS REFINED AS IT IS PASSIONATE."
– *THE TIMES (LONDON)*

"HE HAS THE GIFT OF FINDING AND COMMUNICATING THE EMOTIONAL ESSENCE OF EVERYTHING HE TOUCHES."
– *THE WASHINGTON POST*

"A PASSIONATE YOUNG MAN PLAYING IN THE GRAND OLD MANNER"
– *THE INDEPENDENT*

THE SONY CLASSICAL LISTENING STATION
www.sonyclassical.com

SONY CLASSICAL

"SONY CLASSICAL" ARE TRADEMARKS OF SONY CORPORATION./© 1998 SONY MUSIC ENTERTAINMENT INC.

J&R MUSIC WORLD®
Classical Outlet • 33 Park Row
NY, NY 10038 • (212) 238-9000
Store Hours: Monday through Saturday 9:00am - 6:30pm • Sunday 10:30am - 6:30pm
Order Toll Free 24 Hours A Day, 7 Days A Week
1-800-221-8180

COMMENT

NOVELS WE LOVE

Why are lists so irresistible?

THE common response to the Modern Library's list of the hundred best novels written in English in the twentieth century, which was released last week, seems to be to complain about injustices in the rankings (James Dickey's "Deliverance" is better than anything Joseph Conrad ever wrote?) and then to maintain that the whole idea of ranking books is ridiculous. This can't be right. If all rankings are spurious, it doesn't matter where "Deliverance" finishes; if it matters where "Deliverance" finishes, then all rankings are not spurious. When you have rejected the premises, you shouldn't care about the results.

But people do care, and when they criticize the Modern Library's list of the hundred best novels—or the American Film Institute's list of the hundred best American movies, which was last month's list célèbre, and which ranked "Dances with Wolves" ahead of "City Lights" and "Modern Times"—they may say that lists are stupid, but what they really mean is that *these* lists are stupid. Americans have developed a certain politesse about matters of cultural taste, according to which assertions of one's own preferences must be carefully hedged with disavowals of any claim to objectivity. I happen not to like the Spice Girls, people say, but I understand that another person might find them appealing. People may say this, but they are lying. Not liking the Spice Girls means precisely that you are unable to understand how anyone else could.

Still, the Modern Library list is a weird list. The weirdness possibly has something to do with the composition of the ten-member editorial board that compiled it. The members are Daniel Boorstin, A. S. Byatt, Christopher Cerf, Shelby Foote, Vartan Gregorian, Edmund Morris, John Richardson, Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., William Styron, and Gore Vidal. There's nothing particularly weird about these people as individuals, of course, but a quick statistical analysis of the group yields the following profile. Racial makeup: white, one hundred per cent; other, zero. Gender distribution: male, ninety per cent; other, ten per cent. Average age: 68.7.

Not every appointed body must banally "reflect" society; diversity is more a matter of mind than a matter of biology. The proof is always in the pudding. But here the pudding has turned out to be a list on which ninety-one of the hundred novels are by men and only four were published after 1975.

Some omissions have already been noted: nothing by Doris Lessing or Nadine Gordimer (or any other South African writer), nothing by Patrick White (or any other Australian), nothing by Toni Morrison or John Updike. ("The Magnificent Ambersons" is a better novel than

THE NEW YORKER, 20 WEST 43RD STREET, NEW YORK, N.Y. 10036. David Carey, publisher; Pamela Maffei McCarthy, senior vice-president/deputy editor; Pamela H. Older, senior vice-president/operations; David M. May, associate publisher; Brenda Saget, associate publisher; Peter Armour, vice-president/circulation director; Rhonda Pinzer Sherman, vice-president/special-projects director; Maurie Perl, vice-president/public-relations director; Robert A. Silverstone, vice-president/business manager; Devereux Chatillon, vice-president/general counsel; Susan Harrington, director of creative services; James Oates, director of marketing and planning; Stephanie Sandberg, director of promotion and events. *For advertising inquiries, please call* Gretel Schneider *or* Richard Skeen, advertising directors, at (212) 536-5400. THE NEW YORKER is not responsible for the return or loss of submissions, or for any damage or other injury to unsolicited manuscripts or artwork. Any submission of a manuscript or artwork must be accompanied by a self-addressed envelope of appropriate size, bearing adequate return postage. The magazine does not consider unsolicited photographs or transparencies. © 1998 by The New Yorker Magazine, Inc. All rights reserved. No part of this periodical may be reproduced without the consent of THE NEW YORKER. The periodical's name and logo, and the various titles and headings herein, are registered trademarks of Advance Magazine Publishers, Inc., published through its division The New Yorker Magazine, Inc.

SUBSCRIPTION SERVICE: To inquire about a subscription, to change an address, or to purchase a back issue, please write to THE NEW YORKER, Box 56447, Boulder, Colorado 80328-6447, or telephone (800) 825-2510. Outside of North America, call (303) 678-0354. For a change of address, subscribers should give four weeks' notice. If possible, please send the address label from a recent issue.

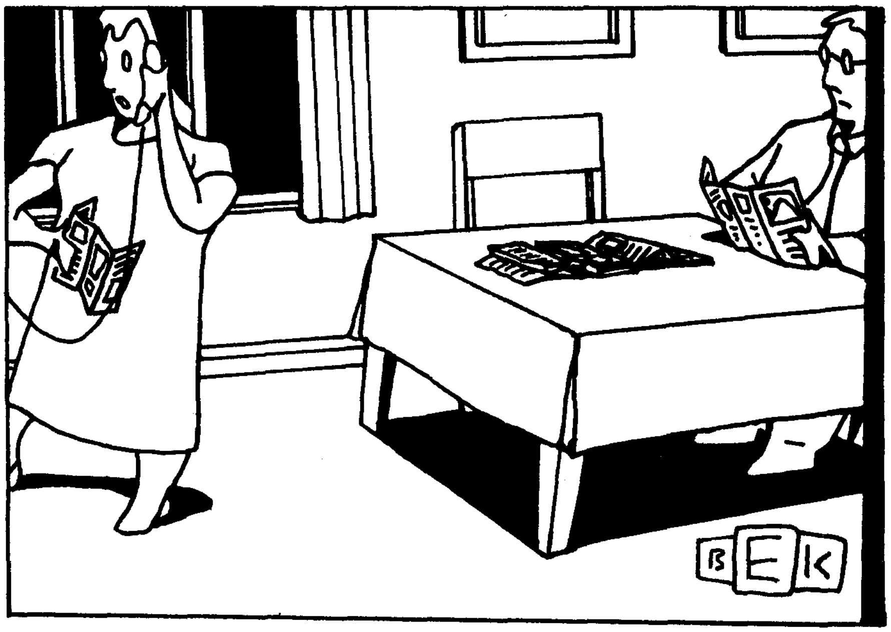
“Rabbit Is Rich”?) What is even more peculiar, though, is that the board has chosen “Ulysses” as the best novel of the century and then has not named a single other experimental or avant-garde work (apart from “Finnegans Wake,” eighteen degrees of unworthiness below “Zuleika Dobson”). Samuel Beckett, Djuna Barnes, Flann O’Brien, John Barth, Donald Barthelme, and Thomas Pynchon are all unrepresented. So are Don DeLillo, Joan Didion, Alison Lurie, Julian Barnes, Kazuo Ishiguro, Jane Smiley, Robert Stone, and almost every other contemporary novelist people actually read. Instead we have Aldous Huxley, John O’Hara, James T. Farrell, and Thornton Wilder. This is not to say that the list is unrecognizable to anyone born after 1950. It’s completely recognizable: these are the books your parents read.

So make your own list, say the publishers of the Modern Library, and they have provided a Web site where readers can create “alternate” lists. They know that people like to make lists almost as much as they like to make fun of or express disgust with other people’s lists.

Nobody thinks it’s invidious to have a favorite color, and it shouldn’t be invidious for literature to have a favorite novel. And although most people don’t see the point in arguing about colors (except children, who will be glad to tell you why your favorite color is yucky), it is a rare human being who, thinking a particular novel is great, will not happily defend its merits against all doubters. Having a favorite novel or movie when you are a grownup is like having a favorite color or a favorite Beatle when you were a kid: it’s a way of explaining who you are to other people.

It’s true that the Modern Library list, like the American Film Institute list, is actually a form of commercial promotion—the Modern Library, which publishes many of the listed books, would like you to buy a few—but that doesn’t mean it’s alien to the real business of literature. Literature is a naturally competitive activity. Some of the greatest works of literature we have—right up there in the top one hundred works in the whole of human history—were composed expressly for the purpose of competition. These were the classical Greek plays, which were often presented in festivals where they competed for prizes—Tragedy Slams, in effect. (At one of these festivals, a play by Sophocles came in second. The play that beat it has disappeared.)

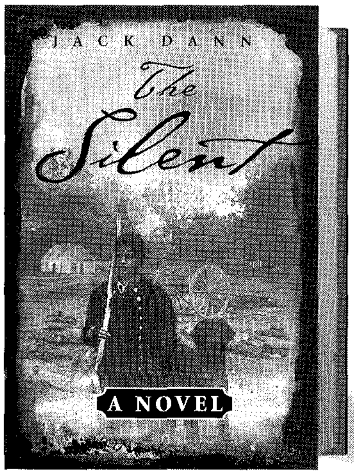
Literary competitiveness is a little less frank today, of course, and writers who boast of their prowess quickly become notorious for doing so. But the desire to top what’s out there seems to many writers to be part of the psychic life of creation. Ernest Hemingway used to say that it was his ambition to knock Mr. Shakespeare on his ass, and then Norman Mailer came along to announce his intention to do the same thing to Hemingway. If saying these things helped them to write better books, who cares? According to the editorial board of the Modern Library, though, both men have been clobbered by Kurt Vonnegut. —LOUIS MENAND



“We have all the brochures, but we can’t decide if we want to die on Mt. Everest or Mt. McKinley.”

From Jack Dann, acclaimed author of *The Memory Cathedral*

“This is narrative storytelling at its best—so highly charged emotionally as to constitute a kind of poetry from hell.”*



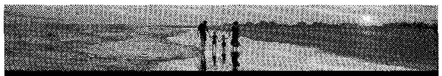
“A writer working at the top of his form.” —PETER STRAUB

*Library Journal

Available wherever books are sold
www.bantam.com
Bantam Hardcover

The Butterfly Net
Visit our new internet catalog at
www.kapaluacatalog.com

NEW YORK'S FAMOUS
FULTON STREET NY NY LOBSTER & SEAFOOD CO. INC.
4 Gourmet Lobster Tails $29.95
Makes a great gift! Plus S&H
Call Toll Free 24hrs. 1-888 LOB-TAIL
WWW.1888LOBTAIL.COM



Seabrook Island Resort
800.845.2475 / 843.768.1000
http://www.seabrookresort.com

"WOW, I can't believe you have that CD!"

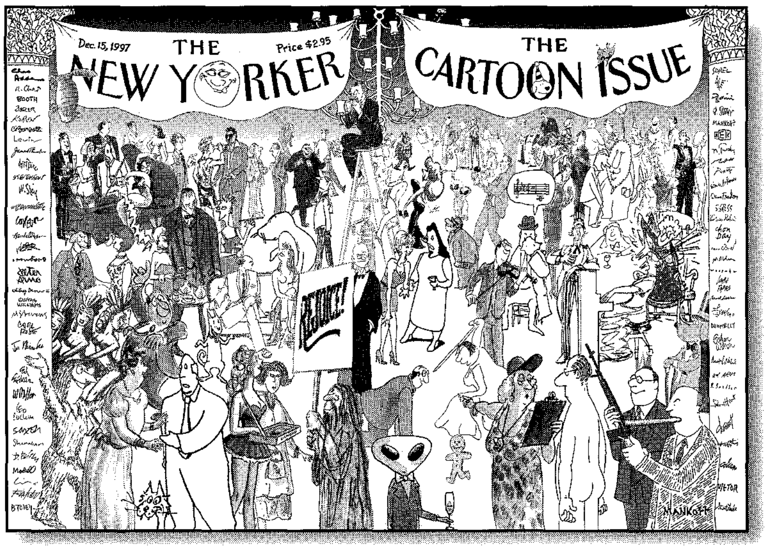
EveryCD is a wholesale music club. Members receive an **850 page catalog** offering virtually every cd in print. All CD's are sold at wholesale, which is about $5.00 per CD less than list price and is guaranteed to be the lowest cost you can find. We do not send unsolicited CD's, and there is never any minimum required to order. Whatever CD's you want, we'll have them for less than anyone else. We'll also have the items you've been wanting to buy but couldn't find. Call today or search our catalog online at www.everycd.com. Be sure to ask for your **30 day FREE trial** to better evaluate our service. Good music selection is hard to find. EveryCD makes it easy. Call now!

1-800-EVERY-CD

www.everycd.com

music for the serious collector™

International customers please call (203) 363-0519



DECORATE YOUR WALLS WITH CHARACTER(S)

Celebrate The New Yorker's *first annual, all-cartoon issue with this collectible poster.*
*Only $19.95!**

Call toll-free 1.888.777.6182.
Poster is 22" high by 28" wide.

*Please add $5.00 per poster for shipping and handling. Residents of CA, CO, GA, IA, IL, KY, MA, MI, NJ, NY and OH, please add applicable sales tax. Offer only available in US. Please allow four to six weeks for delivery.
©1998 The New Yorker, Inc. All rights reserved.

CONTRIBUTORS

PHILIP ROTH ("Communist," p. 56) has contributed to *The New Yorker* since 1958. His four most recent books, "American Pastoral," "Sabbath's Theater," "Operation Shylock," and "Patrimony," have won the Pulitzer Prize, the National Book Award, the PEN/Faulkner Award, and the National Book Critics Circle Award, respectively.

ADAM GOPNIK (The Talk of the Town, p. 26; "Saving the Balzar," p. 39), a staff writer since 1986, lives in Paris and writes a regular column on French life for the magazine. He won the 1997 National Magazine Award for Essays and Criticism and the 1998 George Polk Award for Magazine Reporting.

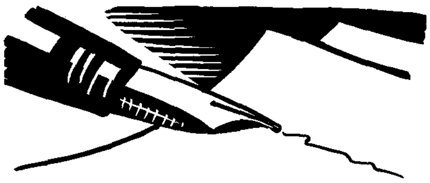
CYNTHIA OZICK ("No Taste for Accounting," p. 34) was awarded a 1998 National Magazine Award for her essay "Who Owns Anne Frank?," which appeared in *The New Yorker* in October, 1997. She is the guest editor of the forthcoming collection "Best American Essays 1998."

PETER J. BOYER ("The People's Network," p. 28), a staff writer since 1992, is the author of "Who Killed CBS? The Undoing of America's Number One News Network." As a correspondent for PBS's "Frontline," he has won a George Foster Peabody Award and an Emmy Award.

PAUL THEROUX ("The Enigma of Friendship," p. 44), a novelist and a travel writer, is the author of more than thirty books, including, most recently, "Kowloon Tong." He lives on Cape Cod and in Hawaii.

MAX VADUKUL (Photograph, p. 53), a staff photographer, received an Alfred Eisenstaedt Award for "The Cricket Players," which appeared in *The New Yorker* in June, 1997. ♦

THE MAIL



RECONCILABLE DIFFERENCES

Paul Goldberger, in bidding a fond farewell to Prince Charles's attempt to imbue British architecture with "reactionary" and "sentimental" values ("A Royal Defeat," July 13th), seems to assume that classicism and modernism are irreconcilable architectural movements. But, as anyone who has visited the Musée d'Orsay, in Paris, can attest, nothing could be further from the truth. The museum, situated in a recently converted turn-of-the-century train station, is proof that it is possible, and even desirable, to blend the curved with the straight, the ornate with the spare, the familiar with the strange, the old with the new. The sight of the museum's majestic Beaux Arts clock against a wall of sheer modern glass is an image of startling beauty—and many non-reactionary non-royals in non-Rolls-Royces flock to see it.

Samuel C. Rickless
Tallahassee, Fla.

MORE THAN "DELIVERANCE"

Christopher Dickey's essay about his father, James ("Summer of Deliverance," July 13th), reminded me of a day in 1970 when James Dickey was to give a reading at the University of Illinois in Champaign-Urbana, where I was a poetry student. That afternoon, another poetry student and I introduced ourselves to him when we saw him shopping in town, and he invited us to a campus bar. The three of us sat in a dark booth, and I watched Dickey and my friend drink pitchers of beer. Every time my friend left the table, Dickey would tell me that I should marry that boy, and every time I left the table, he would tell my friend that he should marry me. Dickey was quite wobbly when we finally left the bar but gave a tremendous reading from "Deliverance" that night. As it happened, I did marry the poetry student, and yet, years later, it isn't "Deliverance" that reminds us of the man we met; it's the end of Dickey's poem "Cherrylog Road." The narrator roars out of a junkyard on his motorcycle after making love in the back seat of a car, "Drunk on the wind in my mouth, Wringing the handlebar for speed, Wild to be wreckage forever."

Judith Kirkwood
Madison, Wis.

MODERN TIMES

Regarding "Slice and Dice," Louis Menand's Comment on the practice of bundling many uses into a single product (July 13th): I used to be able to buy a washer that had one knob for the water temperature, one for the water level, and one for the agitator speed. I used to be able to buy a microwave that had one button for temperature and one for time. I used to have a computer that just did word processing. Now washers and microwaves give me lots of selections that actually mean I may not be able to get the combination of temperature and time that I want. "Frozen Dinners" or "Bread"? What if I just want to heat some water? And if I want to communicate with someone I have to buy a computer that includes all sorts of programs I'll never use. It's no wonder people are frustrated: choice has been taken away by people who want to do all our thinking for us.

Sally MacEwen
Decatur, Ga.

THE WAYWARD PRESS

In his July 6th Comment, "Check It Out," Hendrik Hertzberg states that reporters today are "better educated, more professional, and less likely to be addled by drink than they once were." Perhaps. But they seem no more accurate and honest, and no less prone to jumping on bandwagons, than their colleagues from earlier in this century.

Dan Gale
Glenview, Ill.

Letters should be sent with the writer's name, address, and daytime phone number to "The Mail," The New Yorker, 20 West 43rd Street, New York, N.Y. 10036. They can also be faxed to 212-840-8489 or sent via E-mail to themail@newyorker.com. Letters may be edited for length and clarity, and may be published in any medium; we regret that owing to the volume of correspondence we cannot reply to every letter.

CHILDREN'S THEATRE
VIDEOS

GLOBALSTAGE™

★ The very best in children's theatre from around the world. ★ Globalstage takes young viewers on stage & behind the scenes to experience all the excitement of live professional theatre. ★ Subscribers receive a new release every two months.

1.888.324.5623
www.globalstage.net

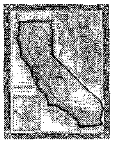
Practice Safe Sun
THE TILLEY HAT
Blocks UV Rays
Repels Rain
Ties On
Floats
Won't Shrink
or Mildew
Tilley Endurables
Free catalogue • 1-800-363-8737 • www.tilley.com

STARFISH PIN
1 ½"
Designed and made by James Breakell.
14k Gold $369.
Sterling Silver $40.
Add $4 handling.
Call for catalog,
(800) 767-6411.
J.H. Breakell & Co.
132 Spring Street, Dept. NYSF, Newport, RI 02840

GALÁPAGOS

You, eleven other adventurers and our licensed naturalist will explore more islands by yacht than any other Galápagos expedition. 60 trip dates. Machu Picchu and Peru options. Free video and brochure.

INCA (Inca Floats, Inc.)
1311-Y 63rd Street, Emeryville, CA 94608
510-420-1550 incafloats@aol.com



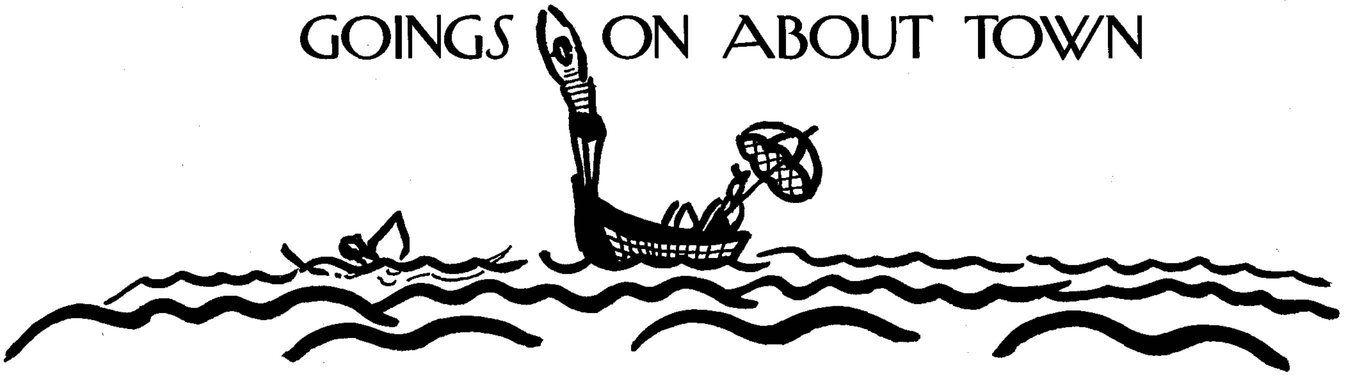
Guaranteed authentic
& over 100 years old

ANTIQUE STATE MAPS

These extraordinary pieces of American history are framed, packed and delivered for $390.

For info. call the MAPLINE - 1-888-OLD-PRINT
Haley & Steele, 91 Newbury St., Boston, MA 02116
See the map catalogue
www.haleysteele.com

GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN



THE THEATRE

OPENINGS AND PREVIEWS

(Please call the phone number listed with the theatre for timetables and ticket information.)

Collected Stories—Uta Hagen stars as a mentor to a young novelist, in Donald Margulies's 1997 drama. In previews. (Lucille Lortel, 121 Christopher St. 239-6200.)

Cymbeline—Andrei Serban is the director of the New York Shakespeare Festival's second outdoor production of the season. Previews begin Aug. 4. (Delacorte Theatre, Central Park near W. 81st St. For information about free tickets, which are required, call 539-8750.)

'Dentity Crisis and **Titanic**—Two one-acts by Christopher Durang, in an evening titled "Mental Putty." Directed by Bill Coyle and Michael Reisman. Opens Aug. 3 at 8 and continues through Aug. 8. (Atlantic Theatre Company Studios, 453 W. 16th St. 841-5418.)

Larry and the Werewolf—A noir comedy written by Jeff Goode and staged, as a Saturday-night serial, by the Adobe Theatre Company. Aug. 1 at 8 and 10. Continues through Aug. 29. (Flea Theatre, 41 White St. 924-0077.)

The Last Empress—From Korea, a musical about the life of Queen Min of the Chosun kingdom. Performances are in Korean with English supertitles. In previews July 31-Aug. 2. Opens Aug. 4 at 8. (New York State Theatre. 307-4100.)

OPENED RECENTLY

Art—Yasmina Reza's farce is a splendid vehicle for three masterly actors, Victor Garber, Alan Alda, and Alfred Molina. They portray friends whose fifteen-year relationship is threatened when one of them buys a large white canvas for two hundred thousand francs. Directed by Matthew Warchus. (Reviewed in our issue of 3/23/98.) (Royale, 242 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

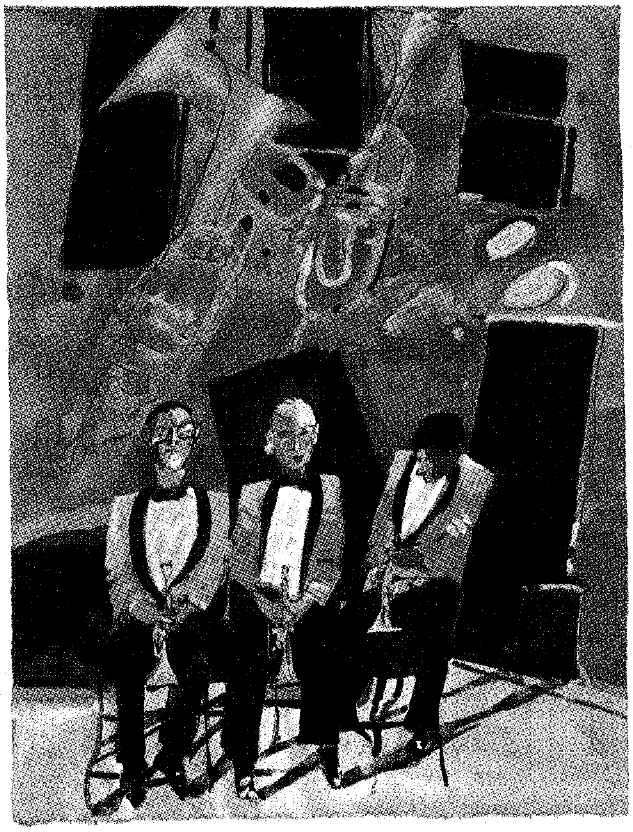
The Beauty Queen of Leenane—The precocious Anglo-Irish playwright Martin McDonagh's riveting winter's tale, set in a rural Irish cottage, about an aged mother and her virgin forty-year-old daughter, who is trapped in a punishing solitude. It's a simple, primitive story, yet it is filled with complex emotional surprises and reversals. (3/16/98) (Walter Kerr, 219 W. 48th St. 239-6200.)

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			29	30	31	1
2	3	4				

Cabaret—A mesmerizing production of the Kander and Ebb musical. Here, the dancers at the Kit Kat Klub, the symbol of anything-goes Weimar Germany, look shell-shocked and stigmatized. As the Emcee, Alan Cumming is astonishing—with his bruised-looking body, his huge, knowing eyes, and his satanic energy, he's a spectacle of mixed messages. Jennifer Jason Leigh replaces Natasha Richardson in the role of Sally Bowles, beginning Aug. 4. Directed by Sam Mendes. (4/6/98) (Kit Kat Klub, 124 W. 43rd St. 719-1300.)

Capitol Steps—The troupe of former congressional aides and interns presents its latest political-comedy revue, "Unzippin' My Doo-Dah and Other National Priorities." (John Houseman, 450 W. 42nd St. 239-6200.)

Dinah Was—Oliver Goldstick's play about the late blues singer Dinah Washington, who is portrayed by the dynamic Yvette Freeman, trots out every blues-queen cliché in the book. But never mind: Freeman's powerful performance and evocative singing, and the general high spirits, make this a memorable evening. (Gramercy Theatre, 127 E. 23rd St. 307-4100.)



"Side Man," by Warren Leight, at the Roundabout.

ROBERT ANDREW PARKER

An Evening with Jerry Herman—The songwriter ("Hello, Dolly!," "Mame") stars with Lee Roy Reams and Florence Lacey in a revue of his own songs. (Booth, 222 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

Falsettoland—William Finn and James Lapine's 1990 musical, in a National Asian American Theatre Company staging. (Vineyard Theatre, 108 E. 15th St. 505-3003. Closes Aug. 18.)

Hedwig and the Angry Inch—Hedwig, as created by John Cameron Mitchell and Stephen Trask, is a sweet transsexual singer from East Berlin, whose cabaret performance cum stadium act becomes a smart, funny, and very moving exploration of the redemptive, if perhaps fleeting, power of love. Michael Cerveris has stepped in for Mr. Mitchell, who will return to the title role on Aug. 5. (Jane Street Theatre, Hotel Riverview Ballroom, 113 Jane St. 239-6200.)

High Society—This musical, based on Philip Barry's play "The Philadelphia Story" and the subsequent movie "High Society," has all the kick of flat champagne. (St. James, 246 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)

Hurlyburly—A revival of David Rabe's 1984 black comedy. (Samuel Beckett, 412 W. 42nd St. 841-5524. Closes Aug. 2.)

Ice Factory 98—The SoHo Think Tank's summer series continues with Joshua Furst and Ryan McClead's "Child of God," a musical about a young man's spiritual quest. July 30-Aug. 1 at 7. The festival runs through Aug. 15. (Ohio Theatre, 66 Wooster St. 966-4844.)

The Irish . . . and How They Got That Way—This revue by Frank McCourt, author of the best-selling memoir "Angela's Ashes," is a generally good-natured if somewhat choppy amalgam of historical tidbits, quotations from letters and speeches, and Irish songs from the past two centuries, performed by a versatile and charming cast of six singers and musicians. Deftly directed by Charlotte Moore. (Irish Repertory Theatre, 132 W. 22nd St. 727-2737.)

Jayson—A musical by Jeff Krell, based on his gay cartoon series. With music and lyrics by Ron Romanovsky and Paul Phillips. (45th Street Theatre, 354 W. 45th St. 279-4200.)

The Judas Kiss—Liam Neeson and Tom Hollander star in David Hare's play about Oscar Wilde and his lover Sir Alfred (Bosie) Douglas. Wilde's libel suit against Douglas's father, the Marquess of Queensberry, has just failed, but Douglas talks Wilde out of fleeing England and, thus, out of escaping prosecution for homosexual acts. Hare uses irony to good effect—practically every character in the play except Wilde is having sex—but an emotional charge is missing, and sparks don't exactly fly between the two actors. (Broadhurst, 235 W. 44th St. 239-6200. Closes Aug. 1.)

Miss Coco Peru's Liquid Universe—A heartfelt series of how-I-got-this-way vignettes written and performed by Miss Coco Peru, otherwise known as Clinton Leupp. The show is occasionally syrupy, and Miss Coco should have given herself more opportunities to show off her terrific singing voice, but her self-aware and self-lacerating humor and her engaging

2 DOORS.

NO GUILT.

CAMRY

SOLARA

THE CAMRY SOLARA 2-DOOR COUPE. COMING MID-AUGUST.

TO SEE IT NOW, GO TO OUR WEB SITE AT www.camrysolara.com

TOYOTA | *everyday*

CAMRY SOLARA

IT'S FOR YOU

1-800-GO-TOYOTA ©1998 Toyota Motor Sales, U.S.A., Inc. Buckle Up! *Do it for those who love you.*

way with a story make this a winning evening. The well-paced direction is by Charles Randolph Wright. Sundays at 8. (Westbeth Theatre Center, 151 Bank St. 741-0391.)

Much Ado About Nothing—The Hudson Valley Shakespeare Festival's second offering of the summer. (Boscobel Restoration, Garrison, N.Y. For ticket information and directions, call 914-265-9575. Closes Aug. 16.)

A New Brain—Malcolm Gets is a songwriter awaiting surgery, in a new musical by William Finn ("Falsettos") and James Lapine. Graciela Daniele is the director. (Mitzi E. Newhouse, Lincoln Center. 239-6200.)

No Strings Attached, Part Two: Mind Attack!—Todo con Nada's Richard Foreman retrospective returns; this year's lineup includes four plays never produced in the United States: "Classical Therapy (or) a Week Under the Influence," "Book of Splendors: Part One," "Café Amérique," and "Georges Bataille's Bathrobe." (NADA, 167 Ludlow St., south of Houston St. For tickets and schedule information, call 330-6876. Closes Aug. 1.)

Nunsense A-Men—An all-male version of Dan Goggin's 1985 musical comedy, "Nunsense." (47th Street Theatre, 304 W. 47th St. 239-6200.)

Othello—The second production in Expanded Arts' summer season of Free Shakespeare in the Park(ing) Lot. (Broome and Ludlow Sts. 253-1813. Closes Aug. 1.)

Playstation, Levels 1-4—Judy Elkan's comedy examines the days and nights of three downtown glamour girls. (Excellent Art Manufacturing, 86 Forsyth St. 414-5167.)

Power Plays—Three short plays, two written by Elaine May and one by Alan Arkin, who perform them with Jeannie Berlin and Anthony Arkin, their respective offspring. May's writing and acting are, almost literally, insanely funny, and she and Arkin are a great match. (They're both long-ago Second City alums.) All three of the plays are too long, but the comic brilliance of May and Arkin père (who also directed) is worth, at a rough estimate, ten million times the price of admission. Presented by Manhattan Theatre Club. (Promenade, Broadway at 76th St. 580-1313.)

The Race of the Ark Tattoo—A site-specific memory play by W. David Hancock, set amid dozens of cast-off flea-market items in P.S. 122's tiny gallery space. Tchotchkes chosen by the audience at each performance determine, in part, the story that gets told that night. A deep sense of loss pervades the basic plot, which concerns a foster parent on Cape Cod and one of the kids in his care. Although elliptical and discursive by its very nature, Hancock's drama, performed by Matthew Maher, is oddly affecting. Co-staged with the Foundry Theatre. (150 First Ave., at 9th St. 477-5288. Closes Aug. 2.)

Ragtime—E. L. Doctorow's epic novel is transformed into a historical pageant. It's a big, brave, passionate gamble, masterfully directed by Frank Galati. (2/2/98) (Ford Center for the Performing Arts, 213 W. 42nd St. 307-4100.)

Sakina's Restaurant—Aasif Mandvi portrays six characters in his one-man exploration of the South Asian community in New York. (American Place, 111 W. 46th St. 239-6200.)

Side Man—The Roundabout Theatre presents Warren Leight's drama, which was staged earlier this year Off Broadway. It's a nostalgic but never sappy paean to the musical obsession and worldly indifference of mid-century big-band musicians, cleverly structured as the recollections of one musician's put-upon son. Though the play gives short shrift to the characters, it invites the audience into the musicians' world, and the cast is good enough to make it come alive. Solidly directed by Michael Mayer. (Broadway at 45th St. 719-1300.)

Smoke on the Mountain—On a Saturday night in June, 1938, the Mount Pleasant (North Carolina) Baptist Church awaits the arrival of the Sanders Family singers and musicians, who are as unpredictable as the Renfro kin in Eudora Welty's "Losing Battles": there's no telling what they'll do when you get 'em all together. This sweet and funny musical comedy, which first played here eight years ago, features Mike Craver and Mark Hardwick's tuneful, often bluegrass-style arrangements of songs like "Bringing in the Sheaves," "I'll Fly Away," and "Rock of Ages." Alan Bailey conceived and directed the show, which was written by Connie Ray. (Lamb's, 130 W. 44th St. 997-1780.)

The Sound of Music—Rebecca Luker is enormously winning as Maria, and the seven children in the cast are mostly delightful, but the production doesn't linger in the memory; there may be music in those hills, but the producers didn't seem to find a whole lot of fresh air up there. (4/6/98) (Martin Beck, 302 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

Symphonie Fantastique—Abstract puppets underwater, set to the music of Berlioz. This isn't rubber-duckie performance art; just as dance can make space a palpable presence onstage, the show's creator, Basil Twist, uses feathers, streamers, mirrors, bubbles, and sophisticated lighting to do the same for water. And, as in dance, the movement illuminates the music. A peerless, delightful summer evening. (HERE, 145 Sixth Ave., near Spring St. 647-0202.)

Twelfth Night—Get thee to Lincoln Center, for Nicholas Hytner's absolutely magical staging of Shakespeare's comedy. To single out any one member of the cast—which includes Philip Bosco, Helen Hunt, David Patrick Kelly, Brian Murray, Paul Rudd, Kyra Sedgwick, and Max Wright—for praise would be wrong, and criticism would seem like nit-picking in the face of so much fun. The only real crime committed is the traditional curtain call: much of the applause is for the extraordinary work of Bob Crowley (sets), Natasha Katz (lighting), Catherine Zuber (costumes), Jeanine Tesori (music), and Scott Stauffer (sound), none of whom are there to take a bow. (Vivian Beaumont, Lincoln Center. 239-6200.)

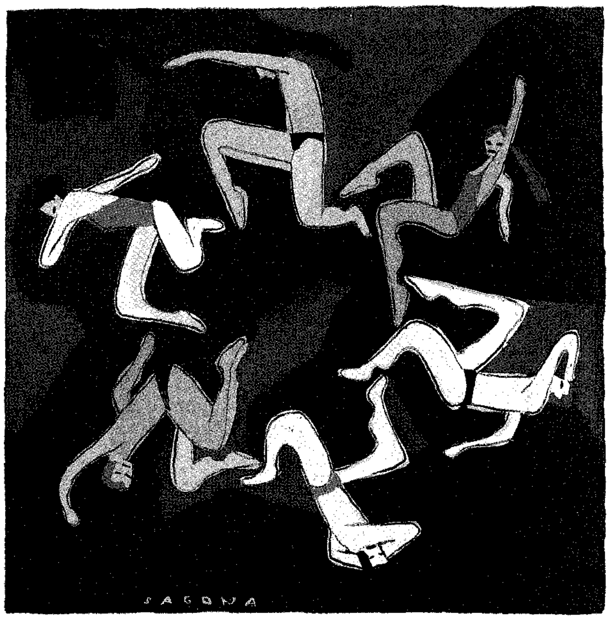
A View from the Bridge—The Roundabout Theatre's excellent revival of Arthur Miller's tragic story of the longshoreman Eddie Carbone and his obsession with his orphaned niece. (1/5/98) (Neil Simon, 250 W. 52nd St. 307-4100.)

Villa Villa—Theatre as mosh pit. The Argentinean troupe De La Guarda herds you into a crowded space, performs undistinguished rock music, swings on ropes over your head, and splashes you until you're drenched. It's an extraordinarily loud and transgressive show, with no point, it seems, beyond proving the troupe's mastery of the carabiner. (Daryl Roth, 20 Union Sq. E., at 15th St. 239-6200.)

You Never Can Tell—A summer treat from the Roundabout Theatre Company. In Shaw's early comedy, a young dentist (the wry and handsome Robert Sean Leonard) tries to romantically outwit an ostensibly modern turn-of-the-century woman (Katie Finneran) but ends up succumbing to her inherently old-fashioned ways. Allen Moyer's seaside-resort set is lovely, as are Michael Krass's costumes, and the cast is super. It would have been a better day at the beach, though, had the director, Nicholas Martin, toned down Catherine Kellner and Saxon Palmer, whose precocious-siblings act seems more suited to Looney Tunes. (Broadway at 45th St. 719-1300.)

LONG RUNS

beauty and the beast: Palace, Broadway at 47th St. 307-4100. . . . **blue man group/tubes:** Astor Place Theatre, 434 Lafayette St. 254-4370. . . . **bring in da noise, bring in da funk:** Ambassador, 219 W. 49th St. 239-6200. . . . **cats:** Winter Garden, Broadway at 50th St. 239-6200. . . . **chicago:** Shubert, 225 W. 44th St. 239-6200. . . . **the fantasticks:** Sullivan Street Playhouse, 181 Sullivan St., at Bleecker St. 674-3838. . . . **forbidden broadway strikes back!:** Stardust, Broadway at 51st St. 239-6200. . . . **gross indecency: the three trials of oscar wilde:** Minetta Lane Theatre, 18 Minetta Lane, east of Sixth Ave., between W. 3rd and Bleecker Sts. 420-8000. . . . **howard crabtree's when pigs fly:** Douglas Fairbanks, 432 W. 42nd St. 239-6200. . . . **i love you, you're perfect, now change:** Westside, 407 W. 43rd St. 239-6200. . . . **jekyll & hyde:** Plymouth, 236 W. 45th St. 239-6200. . . . **late nite catechism:** St. Luke's Church, 308 W. 46th St. 239-6200. . . . **the lion king:** New Amsterdam, 214 W. 42nd St. 307-4100. . . . **les misérables:** Imperial, 249 W. 45th St. 239-6200. . . . **miss saigon:** Broadway Theatre, Broadway at 53rd St. 239-6200. . . . **perfect crime:** Duffy, 1553 Broadway, at 46th St. 695-3401. . . . **the phantom of the opera:** Majestic, 245 W. 44th St. 239-6200. . . . **r & j:** John Houseman, 450 W. 42nd St. 354-2220. . . . **rent:** Nederlander, 208 W. 41st St. 921-8000. . . . **the scarlet pimpernel:** Minskoff, 45th St. west of Broadway. 307-4100. . . . **secrets every smart traveler should know:** Triad, 158 W. 72nd St. 799-4599. . . . **smokey joe's café:** Virginia, 245 W. 52nd St. 239-6200. . . . **stomp:** Orpheum, 126 Second Ave., at St. Marks Pl. 477-2477. . . . **titanic:** Lunt-Fontanne, 205 W. 46th St. 307-4100. . . . **tony n' tina's wedding:** St. John's Church, 81 Christopher St. 239-6200. . . . **visiting mr. green:** Union Square Theatre, 100 E. 17th St. 505-0700.



The Bahia Ballet, at the Joyce.

MARINA SAGONA

DANCE

Bahia Ballet—The twenty-four-member company follows a modern-dance experiment ("Noch Einmal," set to the music of Philip Glass) with two Afro-Brazilian works, "Pangea" and "Berimbau," the latter based on the martial-art form capoeira and set to the music of Naná Vasconcelos and Egberto Gismonti. (Joyce Theatre, 175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 242-0800. July 28-31 at 8 and Aug. 1 at 2 and 8.)

Noche Flamenca—The premier flamenco ensemble returns to work up a sweat in its downtown stomping ground. (Theatre 80, at 80

Kids Sound Off With Music From The Movies!

Join 85 kids from
across the country for
**Disney's
Young Musicians
Symphony Orchestra.**
Enjoy music from
movies like *Raiders of the
Lost Ark, Apollo 13,
The Lion King, Mulan*
and more!

**World Premiere
August 1 at 7 pm/6c**

on

DISNEY CHANNEL

**Hosted By
Bernadette Peters**

www.disney.com

©Disney

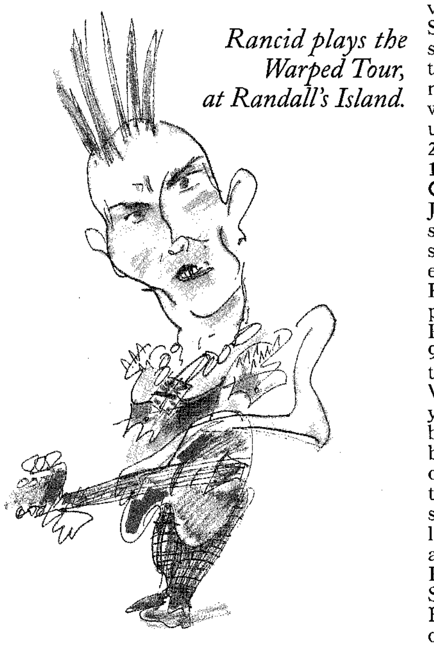
St. Marks Pl. 279-4200. July 28-Aug. 1 and Aug. 4 at 8 and Aug. 2 at 3. Through Aug. 15.)

Central Park SummerStage—A split bill: Pascal Rioult Dance Theatre joins forces with the CORE Ensemble for the première of "El Mozote," about the 1981 massacre in El Salvador; and the soloist Molissa Fenley follows with "On the Other Ocean" and the première of "La Muse Ménagère." (Rumsey Playfield, mid-Park at 72nd St. July 31 at 8:30. No tickets necessary.)

Celebrate Brooklyn!—Former star dancers turned choreographers share an evening. Hernando Cortez (formerly of Paul Taylor) presents six works, including "Bittersweet Symphony," and Arthur Aviles (formerly of Bill T. Jones/Arnie Zane) presents the première of "Narcissus" and two repertory pieces. (Prospect Park Bandshell, Prospect Park W. at 9th St., Brooklyn. Aug. 1 at 8. No tickets necessary.)

OUT OF TOWN

Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival—July 28-30 at 8, July 31 at 8:30, and Aug. 1 at 2 and 8:30: Merce Cunningham Dance Company. . . . ¶ July 30-31 at 8:15 and Aug. 1-2 at 5: Dianne McIntyre & Lester Bowie. (Becket, Mass. For information about tickets, call 413-243-0745.)



Rancid plays the Warped Tour, at Randall's Island.

LIZZIE HOLLEY

NIGHT LIFE

CONCERTS

"Jazz in July"—The 92nd Street Y's annual summer series. July 29: "Gershwin Piano Party." Some fresh faces (trumpeter Ingrid Jensen, saxophonist Virginia Mayhew, drummer Sylvia Cuenca) join the old gang (Dick Hyman, Howard Alden, Frank Wess) at this centennial celebration of the master composer. With a film appearance by the Blue Rhapsodist himself. July 30: "Dick and Derek Back at the Movies." With historical sensitivities as sturdy as their keyboard skills, Dick Hyman and Derek Smith are just the players to essay a history of jazz piano in film. (Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 996-1100. All concerts begin at 8.)

"Mamaloshen"—The singer-actor Mandy Patinkin performs a selection of Yiddish songs, accompanied by violinist Saeka Matsuyama and pianist Eric Stern. (Angel Orensanz Foundation Center for the Arts, 172 Norfolk St., at E. Houston St. 431-8102. July 29-Aug. 1 at 8 and July 29 and Aug. 1 at 2. Through Aug. 22.)

Mavis Staples—The soul-pop singer. (Castle Clinton, Battery Park. July 30 at 7. Free tickets, which are required, will be distributed at 5.)

Culture Club / The Human League / Howard Jones—Proof that there are always second acts in pop culture, especially on the eighties-era New Wave nostalgia circuit. Having survived drug addiction and a putative solo career, Boy George is now famous for being famous. Once, he was a pleasant enough singer with a harmless take on blue-eyed soul. If he appears in full schmatte regalia, it will be worth the price of admission. After "Don't You Want Me," the Human League continued to log a fairly impressive string of synth-pop hits, but the group's personality deficit cost it a following. Another personality-challenged casualty, Howard ("Things Can Only Get Better") Jones lost career momentum when his bubbly shtick went flat. (Radio City Music Hall, Sixth Ave. at 50th St. 247-4777. July 30 at 7:30. . . . ¶ Jones Beach Theatre. 516-221-1000. Aug. 1 at 7:30.)

Trisha Yearwood—Since her hit-filled début in 1991, this powerful singer has been an inspiration to every starry-eyed female vocalist in Nashville. She brings a rare sense of integrity to the music, which her new-country admirers would do well to emulate. (Supper Club, 240 W. 47th St. 921-1940. July 30 at 8.)

Celebrate Brooklyn!—July 31 at 7:30: The seventies funk-and-soul legends Mandrill enjoy a homecoming in Kings County. (Prospect Park Bandshell, Prospect Park W. at 9th St., Brooklyn. No tickets necessary.)

Warped Tour 98—All your favorite skateboarding, tattooed love boys, featuring Rancid's Bay Area mixture of hardcore and ska, and more rollicking punk, rock, and ska with Bad Religion, NOFX, the Specials, Reverend Horton Heat, and others. (Randall's Island. For information about tickets, call 307-7171. Aug. 1. Doors open at noon.)

Smashing Pumpkins—The Chicago misfits whose dense, sprawling sound draws on rock and roll's richest mineral deposits, with trace elements of Pink Floyd, Cheap Trick, and Led Zeppelin, and a lode of New Wave. (Radio City Music Hall. Aug. 1-2 at 8.)

Newport Folk Festival—An intriguing lineup of warhorses (John Hiatt, Joan Baez) with just enough post-folk spice (Nanci Griffith, Violent Femmes, Jimmie Dale Gilmore) to insure more than just acoustic guitars and apple sauce. (Jones Beach Theatre. Aug. 2 at 6.)

CLUBS

(A highly arbitrary listing, in which boldface type indicates some of the more notable performers in town. Musicians and night-club proprietors live complicated lives; it's advisable to call ahead to confirm engagements.)

Arlene Grocery, 95 Stanton St., between Ludlow and Orchard Sts. (358-1633)—A narrow, dimly lit renovated bodega that's the ideal environment for three to five unknown bands struggling their way out of obscurity.

Blarney Star, 43 Murray St. (732-2873)—Home to fine Irish music every Friday night.

Bowery Ballroom, 6 Delancey St. (533-2111)—July 28-31: **PATTI SMITH** is back in town on the tail end of her latest tour. The 1996 album "Gone Again" was her first collection in nearly a decade, and it was a bona-fide event, bursting with pain, humor, danger, warmth, spirituality, sensuality, and a reaffirmation of rock and roll's ability to liberate. After a ten-year period that saw the deaths of friends, colleagues, her younger brother, and her husband, that she could turn out such a positive work was remarkable and inspiring. Inevitably, last year's effort, "Peace and Noise," made in just a year, was something of a letdown. Even so, two Patti Smith records in just as many years is definitely worth celebrating. She's supported by a band that includes her old aide-de-camp Lenny Kaye on guitar. With avant-guitar hero and frequent Smith collaborator **TOM VERLAINE**. Aug. 1: **CHAVEZ**, a kind of indie-rock supergroup, featuring former members of Live Skull and Bullet LaVolta. Aug. 3: **SHUDDER TO THINK** went the opposite route of most major-label-bound indie bands when the foursome jumped ship from seminal D.C. hardcore label Dischord to sign with Epic Records four years ago: rather than becoming shinier and poppier, the band's songs got substantially more abstract, unorthodox, even weird. Opening for bands like Smashing Pumpkins, bald and bold singer Craig Wedren did things like perform in the nude just to taunt audiences who didn't take to the band's complex songs. But even when he's fully dressed, at his own shows Wedren is a challenging, operatic, and gutsy frontman. Aug. 4: **GREG GARING'S FULL CIRCLE.**

CBGB & OMFUG, 315 Bowery, at Bleecker St. (982-4052)—Rock and roll always sounds best in a dump, which may be why this legendary club is still thriving.

Chez Es Saada, 42 E. 1st St. (777-5617)—The improbably grand tiled staircase brings you down to a basement transformed by scattered rose petals and golden light into the secret Tangier of Burroughs and Bowles. North African-flavored bistro fare is served throughout, d.j.s play everything from nineteen-fifties Egyptian 45s to up-to-the-minute Moroccan chaiba dance music, and you can slouch on a hassock and sip a vintage cocktail. For all the glamour, though, the owners are determined to maintain a neighborhood atmosphere, easygoing and friendly.

Don Hill's, 511 Greenwich St. (219-2850)—A tidy little SoHo bar with an above-average P.A. system and topnotch local bands on the docket. Friday night is SqueezeBox, a vinyl-and-velvet gay glamfest, hosted by Misstress Formika.

Downtime, 251 W. 30th St. (695-2747)—A friendly split-level bar with a dazzling quasi-Cubist paint job and an above-average pool table.

Fez, 380 Lafayette St. (533-7000)—A comfortable neo-Moroccan bar hidden inside the Time Café. The **MINGUS BIG BAND** still packs them in every Thursday. Dining.

The Greatest Bar on Earth, 1 World Trade Center (524-7000)—Hyperbole, perhaps, but it's certainly the highest. And Thursdays through Saturdays you'll find live music, dancing, and dining, a hundred and seven stories above the city.

Irving Plaza, 17 Irving Pl., at 15th St. (777-6800)—July 30: **ANTHRAX**, New York's original rap-metal outfit. Aug. 1: **FROM GOOD HOMES**. . . . ¶ The Swing Dance Society gathers here every Sunday, with sets from eight until midnight. For information on the society, call 696-9737.

Life, 158 Bleecker St. (420-1999)—More eighties New Wave nostalgia, with special emphasis on goth, starring the **CREATURES** and the black-eyelinered howl of **SIOUXSIE SIOUX**.

Mercury Lounge, 217 E. Houston St. (260-4700)—A medium-sized, brick-walled haven of a back room where, no matter who's onstage, the listening is a pleasure. July 30-31: **BOSS HOG**, fronted by the wife-and-husband duo Cristina Martinez and John Spencer (best known for his own band, the Blues Explosion), who once worked together in the barely listenable noise-punk band Pussy Galore. In Boss Hog, they barrel through their own brand of mutated blues.

Les Poulets, 16 W. 22nd St. (229-2000)—The name may be French, but the music here is Latin: expect salsa, merengue, and, now and then, a cha-cha. Dining.

Rodeo Bar, 375 Third Ave., at 27th St. (683-6500)—The walls simulate a log cabin, a buffalo head blows smoke through its nostrils, and a horse trailer has been converted into a bar. It's just about the best free house in town.

S.O.B.'s, 204 Varick St., at W. Houston St. (243-4940)—A great grass hut with a fruit-and-bamboo motif, dedicated to calypso, reggae, and the bossa nova. July 30: The club's first annual African Festival features Senegalese singer-songwriter **WASIS DIOP.** Aug. 4: Reggae singer **YELLOWMAN** toasts the troops.

TRAMPS, 51 W. 21st St. (727-7788)—July 29: **FIVE CHINESE BROTHERS** formed more than a decade ago at Columbia University (as the Special Guests) and have since become local heroes and one of smart pop's great journeyman acts. Think Squeeze or Crowded House, only louder, looser, bluesier—more American. July 30: **MANDRILL** (see Celebrate Brooklyn!, in Concerts) and vocalist **SANDRA ST. VICTOR.**

JAZZ AND STANDARDS

ALGONQUIN HOTEL, 59 W. 44th St. (840-6800)—Singer **MONICA MANCINI,** daughter of Henry, is at work in the woody nook known as the Oak Room through Aug. 1. Dining.

BIRDLAND, 315 W. 44th St. (581-3080)—July 29-Aug. 1: It took **BOBBY HUTCHERSON** to translate the modernist grammar of sixties jazz for the vibraphone. At his best when he glides into the spare, mysterious ruminations perfected on classics like Eric Dolphy's "Out to Lunch," Hutcherson also loves to strut his piston-mallet technique on up-tempo chargers. A first-rate band featuring some inventive younger admirers, pianist **GERI ALLEN** and bass giant **CHRISTIAN MC BRIDE,** and a blue-chip veteran, drummer **AL FOSTER,** will provide Hutcherson with the heft and poise that New York players specialize in. Aug. 2: The **CHICO O'FARRILL AFRO-CUBAN JAZZ BIG BAND.** Aug. 3: The **TOSHIKO AKIYOSHI JAZZ ORCHESTRA.** Aug. 4: The **FAMOUS DUKE ELLINGTON ORCHESTRA.** Dining.

BLUE NOTE, 131 W. 3rd St., near Sixth Ave. (475-8592)—Through Aug. 2: The remarkably versatile singer-pianist **DIANE SCHUUR,** who is equally at home with forties standards, R. & B. wails, and sultry torch songs. Dining.

CARLYLE HOTEL, Madison Ave. at 76th St. (744-1600)—**PETER MINTUN** settles in for a two-month stay in Bemelmans Bar.

CITRON 47, at 401 W. 47th St. (397-4747)—A comfy living-room bistro in Hell's Kitchen. The **CHUCK WILSON** quartet is out to show that Monday nights aren't just for big bands. Swing saxophonist Wilson's chamber-jazz foursome includes guitarist **HOWARD ALDEN,** a master of pre-bop idioms, trombonist **JOEL HELLENY,** and bassist **MURRAY WALL.** The Brazilian percussionist **CAFE** leads his own eclectic group on Tuesdays. Dining.

CLEOPATRA'S NEEDLE, Broadway at 92nd St. (769-6969)—**MARC COPLAND,** a sterling pianist whose recordings with bass and drums display his sensitive touch and acute harmonic perspective, revels in that tried-and-true setting, with alternating players, Mondays through the end of the year.

COVE RESTAURANT, 2 South End Ave., Battery Park City (964-1500)—The Microscopic Septet is now a fond memory, but its former pianist, **JOEL FORRESTER,** has bounced back nicely. This delightfully eclectic stylist and composer turns a regular Tuesday-and-Thursday-night engagement into a showcase for one man's parallel musical universe. Special guests are also promised.

FIFTY SEVEN FIFTY SEVEN, 57 E. 57th St. (758-5757)—A cool, sumptuous piano-and-bass room in the Four Seasons Hotel, with twenty-two-foot-high ceilings, a long backlit bar stocked with single-malt Scotch, and fine jazz seven nights a week. Dining.

FIREBIRD CAFÉ, 363 W. 46th St. (586-0244)—Pianist and singer **STEVE ROSS** has extended his show of Cole Porter tunes through Aug. 1.

IRIDIUM, 44 W. 63rd St. (582-2121)—The **FORT APACHE BAND** (through Aug. 1) grafts its steaming Latin sensibility onto Coltrane-era modal vamps; leader Jerry Gonzalez is a virtuoso congero and a steadily maturing trumpeter, and his brother Andy is the most prominent bassist on the Latin-jazz scene. Mondays belong to **LES PAUL.** Now eighty-three, the master guitarist and inventor is a delightfully loose cannon. Besides playing silken-toned, eccentrically phrased lines with an ease that belies the passing decades, Paul schmoozes with his band, the crowd, the waiters, and anyone else who happens into the club. There's no more entertaining way to start the workweek.

JAZZ STANDARD, 116 E. 27th St. (576-2232)—Through Aug. 1: The **JONNY KING** quintet. King plays smart jazz piano, drawing on a host of superior models as he firms up his own increasingly authoritative voice. His solid quartet includes the assured tenor saxophonist **DON BRADEN,** vibraphonist **JOE LOCKE,** bassist **ED HOWARD,** and drummer **TONY REEDUS.**

KNITTING FACTORY, 74 Leonard St., between Broadway and Church St. (219-3055)—Through July 30: The **DAVID MURRAY** quintet. He may have had his thunder stolen by the neo-con explosion, but Murray, the great hope of the eighties, is still a contender and still capable of toppling buildings with his galvanic tenor-saxophone work. He hasn't been seen in these parts for some time—some old pals, including trombonist **CRAIG HARRIS,** pianist **JOHN HICKS,** drummer **ANDREW CYRILLE,** and bassist **CURTIS LUNDY,** will be on hand to welcome him home. July 30-31: A Boston demigod as a player and teacher, tenor saxophonist **GEORGE GARZONE** has his ardent supporters down here as well, including star saxophonist and sometime collaborator Joe Lovano.

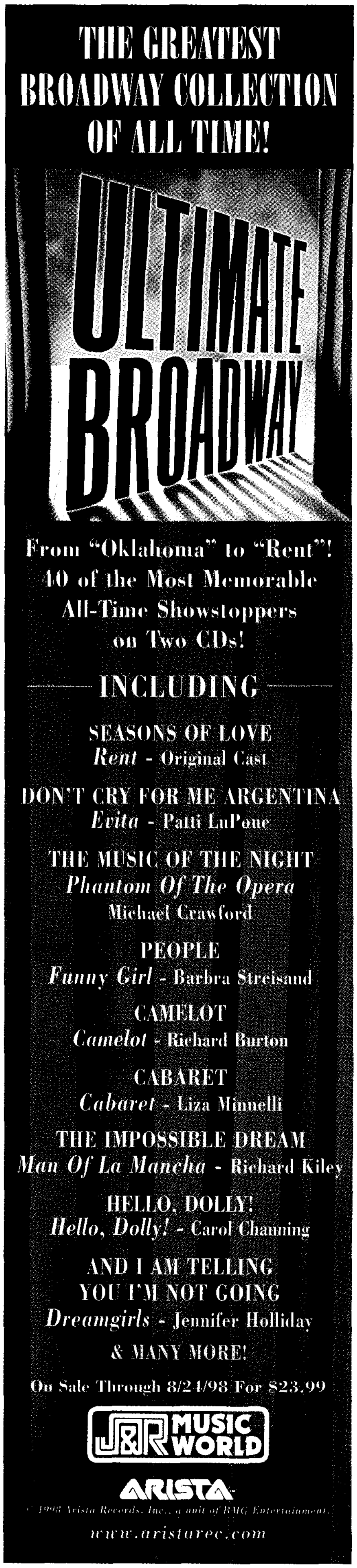
RAINBOW & STARS, 30 Rockefeller Plaza (632-5000)—A plush, Art Deco shrine, sixty-five floors above it all, complete with a panoramic view as dizzying as the tab. . . . ¶ Across the hall, in the Rainbow Room, there's a revolving dance floor, plus swinging big-band music courtesy of the Rainbow Room Orchestra, featuring vocalists Sean Mahony and Hilary Kole. Closed Mondays.

SWEET BASIL, 88 Seventh Ave. S., at Bleecker St. (242-1785)—A jazz outpost where the musicians are always top-shelf. Through Aug. 2: The **GEORGE MRAZ** quartet. Mraz, a great bassist and invaluable team player, has been expertly reading the minds of so many pianists and hornmen over the years (Tommy Flanagan and Joe Henderson have been recent employers) that seeing him front his own band will be an agreeable sight: the outfielder comes up to bat. Intelligence, taste, and wicked chops inform everything Mraz does. With pianist **RICHIE BIERACH,** drummer **BILLY HART,** and saxophonist **RICH PERRY.** Dining.

TONIC, 107 Norfolk St. (358-7503)—July 29: **ERIK FRIEDLANDER'S CHIMERA** makes gorgeous and adventurous chamber jazz with simple means: cello (played by Friedlander), bass, and two clarinets. July 31: Bassist shmassist—**JOEY BARON AND BARON DOWN** can get along just fine as a face-to-the-future drums, saxophone, and trombone trio. It doesn't hurt that the leader is about as good as it gets when it comes to post-modern percussionists; the raucously refined players, saxophonist **ELLERY ESKELLIN** and trombonist **STEVE SWELL,** banter and challenge with expert intuition. Aug. 2: A saxophonist and clarinettist of great promise, **CHRIS SPEED** has been lending his rigorous approach to a handful of bands for the past few years. His breakout is imminent.

VILLAGE VANGUARD, 178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (255-4037)—July 28-Aug. 2: The **CHARLES MC PHERSON** quartet. A Californian by way of Detroit, this Charlie Parkerite and former Mingus star still keeps one foot stylistically in Kansas City and the other in New York; his blues-soaked bop reconciles the classic with the modern. Featuring pianist **MICHAEL WEISS,** bassist **ERIC REVIS,** and drummer **WINARD HARPER.** The **VANGUARD JAZZ ORCHESTRA** holds sway on Mondays.

ZINNO, 126 W. 13th St. (924-5182)—July 29-Aug. 1: A jazz piano trio featuring three expert practitioners of the timeless art: pianist **JUNIOR MANCE,** bassist **EARL MAY,** and drummer **JACKIE WILLIAMS.** Dining.


THE GREATEST BROADWAY COLLECTION OF ALL TIME!

ULTIMATE BROADWAY

From "Oklahoma" to "Rent"!
40 of the Most Memorable
All-Time Showstoppers
on Two CDs!

INCLUDING

SEASONS OF LOVE
Rent - Original Cast

DON'T CRY FOR ME ARGENTINA
Evita - Patti LuPone

THE MUSIC OF THE NIGHT
Phantom Of The Opera
Michael Crawford

PEOPLE
Funny Girl - Barbra Streisand

CAMELOT
Camelot - Richard Burton

CABARET
Cabaret - Liza Minnelli

THE IMPOSSIBLE DREAM
Man Of La Mancha - Richard Kiley

HELLO, DOLLY!
Hello, Dolly! - Carol Channing

AND I AM TELLING
YOU I'M NOT GOING
Dreamgirls - Jennifer Holliday

& MANY MORE!

On Sale Through 8/24/98 For $23.99

J&R MUSIC WORLD

ARISTA

© 1998 Arista Records, Inc., a unit of BMG Entertainment.

www.aristarec.com

ART

MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 82nd St. (879-5500)—"Ellsworth Kelly on the Roof." The only problem with the sculpture garden on the roof of the Met is that the works on display are pitted against the magnificent Manhattan skyline. But the soaring trapezoids and hovering arcs of Kelly's sculptures—spare, uninflected, and resolutely planar—elegantly hold their own. The main subject here seems to be the sky, which on a clear, crisp day is tinted a Kelly blue. Three of the five pieces on display (through late fall) are recent works that have never before been exhibited publicly. . . . ¶ The French designer Jean Dunand (1877-1942) richly deserves the moniker the Met has bestowed on him in this mini-retrospective: "Master of Art Deco." When F. Scott Fitzgerald said wistfully that he loved the world when it twinkles, he might have been thinking of Dunand's stunning screens, created for the salon of Solomon Guggenheim, which depict angels falling from Heaven, in gilt lacquer speckled with mother-of-pearl and eggshell. The bedroom suite (in silver-and-black lacquer and furry goatskin) that he designed for Templeton Crocker's penthouse apartment in San Francisco is the real-life inspiration for all those swanky interiors that Fred Astaire swivelled through in the days before anyone knew that there was such a thing as camp. Through Oct. 25. . . . ¶ "Edward Burne-Jones: Victorian Artist-Dreamer," a splendid survey devoted to this preëminent Pre-Raphaelite, includes paintings, works on paper, books, stained glass, and tapestries that Burne-Jones executed in collaboration with his friend William Morris. Through Sept. 6. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:30, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 9.)

Museum of Modern Art, 11 W. 53rd St. (708-9480)—The first New York retrospective devoted to Pierre Bonnard in thirty years. Through Oct. 13. (See also Galleries—Uptown.) . . . ¶ "Love Forever: Yayoi Kusama, 1958-68." Like Yoko Ono, Kusama was a refugee from an affluent Japanese family who sought encouragement for her artistic ambitions in New York's avant-garde in the sixties. Kusama's early "infinity net" paintings found supporters in the masculine precincts ruled by such abstractionists as Donald Judd and Frank Stella, but the artist's more extreme, performance-oriented gestures—like appearing nude in many of the pieces—linked her with the radicals of that scene. In this show, which is strong on paintings, objects, and archival materials, Kusama looks like one of those seminal artists who was years ahead of her time. Some of this is due to a shift in art-world fashion, which is currently obsessed with gender, the body, and performance, but there is no doubting the bravery of Kusama's achievement. (See also Uptown and Downtown gallery listings.) Through Sept. 22. . . . ¶ "Tony Smith: Architect, Painter, Sculptor." Through Sept. 22. . . . ¶ The impressive retrospective of Alexander Rodchenko (1891-1956) is valuable as much for its insights into the rise and decline of the Russian Revolution as for its art-historical contribution. A leader of the avant-garde in the twenties, Rodchenko was a founder of Constructivism, an early—and very witty—practitioner of photocollage, and a brilliant graphic designer. The works from the teens and early twenties radiate a purist's idealism, which is as evident in the artist's letterhead design for the new state airline as it is in his black-on-black and white-on-white abstractions. Photocollage led to photojournalism, and Rodchenko's grainy, eerily composed shots of daily life and work in Moscow are rich in ironies, political as well as artistic. The most powerful document is a 1933 magazine photo essay about the building of a canal, which purports to show the intrinsic heroism of hard work. In fact, it depicts the first of Stalin's gulags, in which some two hundred thousand people died. Through Oct. 6. (Open Saturdays through Tuesdays, and Thursdays, 10:30 to 6; Fridays, 10:30 to 8:30.)

ROXANNA BIKADOROFF

Guggenheim Museum, Fifth Ave. at 89th St. (423-3500)—It would be easy to dismiss the Danish painter Vilhelm Hammershøi (1864-1916) as a reactionary purveyor of genre scenes: the echoes of Vermeer and de Hooch in his gray, deserted street scenes and empty rooms are all too obvious. Yet Hammershøi is very much a man of his own time. A chilly, bare interior of an elegant baroque palace hall (1909) speaks of the dawning of conscious alienation in the early twentieth century as powerfully as the works of Hammershøi's contemporaries in Paris expressed the era's idealism. Through Sept. 7. . . . ¶ "The Art of the Motorcycle," a dazzling collection of a hundred and eleven bikes, from the late nineteenth century to the present. The installation, designed by Frank Gehry, is itself a work of art: the architect has faced the ramps of the rotunda with stainless steel, giving a hallucinatory shimmer to Frank Lloyd Wright's masterpiece. The show might be summarized in one word: bitchin'. Through Sept. 20. . . . ¶ "Peggy Guggenheim: A Centennial Celebration." Through Sept. 2. (Open Sundays through Wednesdays, 10 to 6; Fridays and Saturdays, 10 to 8.)

Guggenheim Museum SoHo, 575 Broadway, at Prince St. (423-3500)—Six finalists for the Hugo Boss Prize—Douglas Gordon, Huang Yong Ping, William Kentridge, Lee Bul, Pipilotti Rist, and Lorna Simpson—await the announcement of the winner. In the meantime, museumgoers may judge for themselves. Through Sept. 20. . . . ¶ Four video installations ("Bronx," "Roma," "Liquid Crystals," and "Baroque Cathodic Movements") by the Venetian artist Fabrizio Plessi. Through Sept. 13. (Open Wednesdays through Sundays, 11 to 6, and Saturday evenings until 8.)

Whitney Museum of American Art, Madison Ave. at 75th St. (570-3676)—A mid-career retrospective of Charles Ray, one of the most discreet yet powerful artists to emerge from the raucous L.A. art scene. The show emphasizes Ray's work as a sculptor, from early sendups of Minimalism (a hollow black cube filled to the brim with printer's ink) to his more recent business with oversized department-store mannequins. There are also a number of compelling photo-Conceptualist pieces, such as "All My Clothes," a series of snapshots documenting the artist wearing, yes, every item in his wardrobe. One of the most pleasing things about the Ray show is its modesty: twenty-some works have been given maximum breathing space, occasionally one per room—a rare spaciousness in a retrospective for a living artist. Through Aug. 30. . . . ¶ "Unknown Terrain: The Landscapes of Andrew Wyeth." Through Aug. 30. (Open Wednesdays, and Fridays through Sundays, 11 to 6; Thursdays, 1 to 8.)

Brooklyn Museum of Art, Eastern Parkway (718-638-5000)—"Masters of Color and Light: Homer, Sargent, and the American Watercolor Movement" showcases more than a hundred and fifty works from the museum's extensive collection. Through Aug. 23. (Open Wednesdays through Fridays, 10 to 5; Saturdays, 11 to 9; and Sundays, 11 to 6.)

Cooper-Hewitt National Design Museum, Fifth Ave. at 91st St. (849-8300)—"Fountains: Splash and Spectacle." The best part of this historical survey of fountain design is the neat aqua booklet that comes with it, listing the top fountains in New York—from Paul Manship's golden Prometheus, at Rockefeller Center, to Gilmore Clarke's Unisphere (and unofficial swimming pool), in Queens. Alas, there are no fountains splashing here, except for those in the photographs and in prints that date back to the time of Siena's Fonte Gaia (ca. 1419). Through Oct. 11. . . . ¶ "Under the Sun: An Outdoor Exhibition of Light" is less an exhibition than a solar-energy propagandafest ("adaptable, clean, constant, durable, versatile," etc.); still, it's certain to fascinate kiddies and New Agers alike. Through Oct. 25. (Open Tuesdays, 10 to 9, with no admission charge after 5; Wednesdays through Saturdays, 10 to 5; Sundays, noon to 5.)

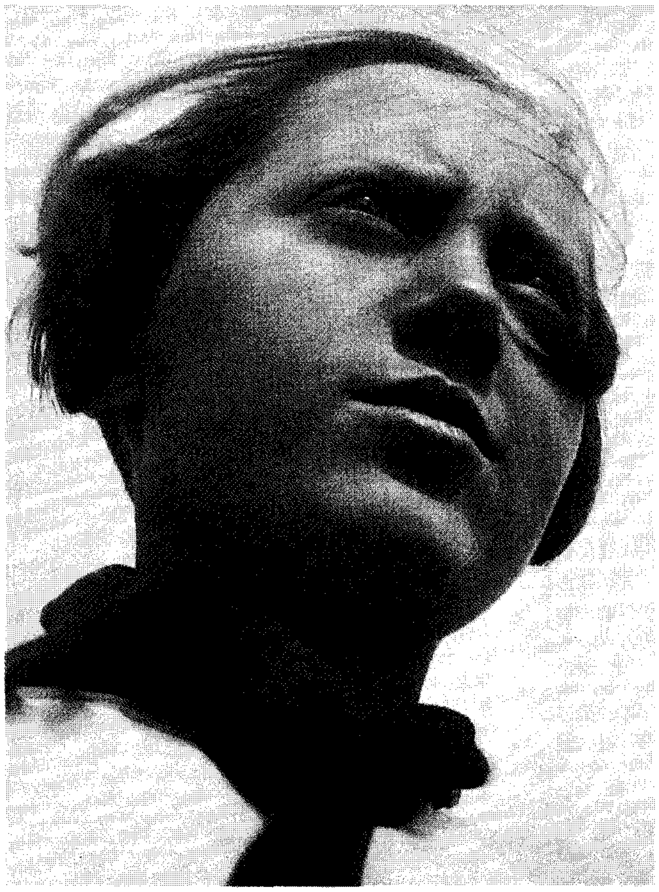
Isamu Noguchi Garden Museum, 32-37 Vernon Blvd., at 33rd Rd., Long Island City (718-204-7088)—Works from every period in the career of the Japanese-American sculptor (1904-88) are installed in a garden and in open-air galleries carved from, and added to, an old photo-engraving factory. (Open Wednesdays through Fridays, 10 to 5; Saturdays and Sundays, 11 to 6.)

Jewish Museum, Fifth Ave. at 92nd St. (423-3200)—"An Expressionist in Paris: The Paintings of Chaim Soutine." In this decade of fiftieth anniversaries, it's fitting to reëxamine Soutine (1893-1943), whose Expressionist canvases have frequently been interpreted in light of his death in Nazi-occupied France. His melting figures have a tinge of madness, organic or otherwise, that prefigures Francis Bacon. But Soutine's own bugbear was Rembrandt, as his intimate studies of flayed fowl (and a Rembrandtian side of beef) attest. An energetic series of landscapes from the early twenties prove him to have been less a tortured soul than a fiercely ambitious painter who worked entirely on his own terms, his best years falling in the art-historical Dark Ages between the wars. Through Aug. 16. . . . ¶ A retrospective devoted to the work of George Segal. Through Oct. 4. (Open Sundays through Thursdays, 11 to 5:45, and Tuesday evenings until 8.)

National Museum of the American Indian, 1 Bowling Green (668-6624)—"Indian Humor," an exhibition of paintings and sculptures that counter the stoic stereotype, includes Choctaw Marcus Amerman's "Iron Horse Jacket," a leather biker jacket with a beaded image of Brooke Shields in a bikini; Blackfoot Ernie Pepion's "Manifest Dysentery," a disposable diaper taped to moss; Caughnawaga Mohawk Richard Glazer-Danay's "Fry Bread Freda" and "Fry Bread Fred," a pair of painted upside-down bowls; and Hupa and Yurok George Blake's "D.C. Redneck," a ceramic football helmet that displays the profile of a bald and badly shaven blond man. Through Aug. 2. (Open daily, 10 to 5, and Thursday evenings until 8.)

P.S. 1 Contemporary Art Center, 22-25 Jackson Ave., at 46th Ave., Long Island City. (718-784-2084)—"Gordon Matta-Clark: Drawings Retrospective and Re-creation of Historic Projects." Matta-Clark (1943-78) was known for slicing chunks from houses and office buildings. He would have had fun with his retrospective at P.S. 1; his desire to, say, bifurcate the elaborately renovated space would have made for an intriguing institutional dilemma. As it stands, this tribute to the architect turned artist is uncommonly thorough and restrained. It presents Matta-Clark's most striking public projects without sensationalizing a man who, like his Earth Art colleague Robert Smithson, died on the cusp of something great. The exhibition includes documentary photographs, notes, and films of works like "Open House (Dumpster)" (1971), a makeshift gallery in a SoHo garbage receptacle, which is also re-created in the museum's outdoor galleries. Most surprising are two rooms full of frenetic "energy forms," colorful nature drawings that add an exuberant note to the Conceptualist glaze Matta-Clark's art has accrued over the years. Through Aug. 30. (Open Wednesdays through Sundays, noon to 6.)

Queens Museum of Art, Flushing Meadows–Corona Park (718-592-9700)—Like Jerry Seinfeld, Robert Colescott's raucous, densely colorful paintings use insults to entertain. By turns ugly and gorgeous, these recent pictures by the seventy-year-old artist (the United States's contribution to last year's Venice Biennale, and the first by an African-American) take on topics from miscegenation to Alexandre Dumas's Haitian heritage. Their layover at the suburban Queens Museum comes equipped with wall texts offering definitions of stereotypes and satire, the better to ease newcomers into Colescott's scathing wit. Through Aug. 27. (Open Wednesdays through Fridays, 10 to 5, and Saturdays and Sundays, noon to 5.)



"Pioneer Girl," at MOMA's Alexander Rodchenko retrospective.

GALLERIES—UPTOWN

(Summer hours: unless otherwise noted, galleries are open Mondays through Fridays, from around 10 or 11 to between 5 and 6.)

"American Masters"—Work by Thomas Hart Benton, Marsden Hartley, Reginald Marsh, and other New Deal-era stalwarts. Through Aug. 8. (MB Modern, 41 E. 57th St. 371-3444.)

"Food for Thought"—Art about comestibles, by Milton Avery, Isabel Bishop, Roz Chast, Janet Fish, Jacob Lawrence, and Wayne Thiebaud, among others. Through Aug. 12. (DC Moore, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. 247-2111.)

"No!Art Show No. 3"—The Gat gallery shows a key work of early rebarbativism, Boris Lurie's nineteen-foot mural, "Dismembered Women: Combat on Rooftop" (1951), alongside archival material about other works of pioneering vulgarity. Through Sept. 30. (1100 Madison Ave., at 82nd St. 327-0441.)

"Painting in Provincetown"—Works by two outdoor abstractionists (Hans Hofmann and Jack Tworkov) and their gently figurative friend Milton Avery. Through July 31. (Emmerich, 41 E. 57th St. 752-0124.)

Short List—**PIERRE BONNARD,** Wildenstein, 19 E. 64th St. 879-0500. Through Oct. 10. . . . **JOAN BROWN,** Adams, 41 W. 57th St. 644-5665. Through Aug. 14. . . . **SHIRLEY GOLDFARB,** Zabriskie, 41 E. 57th St. 752-1223. Through Sept. 4. . . . **YAYOI KUSAMA** and **ROBERT FILLIOU,** Robert Miller, 41 E. 57th St. 980-5454. Both shows through Aug. 7. . . . **SHARI MENDELSON,** St. Peter's Church, Lexington Ave. at 54th St. 935-2200. Through Aug. 24. . . . **ANNE RYAN,** Washburn, 20 W. 57th St. 397-6780. Through July 31.

GALLERIES—CHELSEA

"Bathroom"—A large, ambitious, and generally satisfying group show dedicated to that most humble yet essential of household and institutional rooms. Curated by Wayne Koestenbaum, who wrote "The Queen's Throat" and "Jackie Under My Skin," the show assembles works by the famous (Andy Warhol, Alice Neel, Robert Mapplethorpe) as well as the young and relatively obscure. Among the highlights of the latter group: Chivas Clem and Claude Wampler's "Frank Hole (Gloria Sinatra)," a viciously funny video sendup of the late singer in which the two artists visited a university glory hole and took turns poking their tongues through an orifice in a glossy photo of Ol' Blue Eyes. Lurid, disrespectful, unforgettable. Through Aug. 7. (Healy, 530 W. 22nd St. 243-3753.)

"Painting: Now and Forever, Part I"—In the first installment of a project that attempts to clarify the past three decades of painterly practice, two exhibitions, at the Marks and Hearn galleries, emphasize the present—the "now" within the "forever." Examples of sixties color-field painting (such as a stunning Kenneth Noland target) reinforce recent tendencies toward a new psychedelic opticality (e.g., works by Franz Ackermann, Michael Bevilacqua, and Lisa Ruyter, among others). The painterly gesture also gets its turn, both historically (an elegant Brice Marden) and among younger artists (the swirling rings of a Keith Mayerson). Camp has its moments—notably Suzy Spence's deliciously tacky picture of "Beverly Hills 90210" star Tori Spelling floating in a pool. And there is no lack of the unusual: Warhol's "piss," or oxidation, paintings are well known, but who, before now, was privy to his set of small "come paintings," executed in gesso and semen? Through July 31. (Marks, 522 W. 22nd St., 243-0200; and Hearn, 530 W. 22nd St., 727-7366.)

"Small Paintings"—Niche work, if you can get it, by Ingo Meller, Richmond Burton, Joan Mitchell, Juan Uslé, and others. Through Aug 28. (Cheim & Read, 521 W. 23rd St. 242-7727.)

Short List—**VINNIE ANGEL,** Kravets/Wehby, 529 W. 21st St. 352-2238. Through Aug. 28. . . . **DEBORAH BROWN,** Morthland, 225 Tenth Ave., at 23rd St. 242-7767. Open Sundays, noon to 5; through July 31. . . . **JONATHAN HOROWITZ,** Greene Naftali, 526 W. 26th St. 463-7770. Through July 31. . . . **H. N. SEMJON,** Au Base, 433 W. 14th St. 414-0563. Through July 31. . . . **JENNY WATSON,** Nosei, 530 W. 22nd St. 741-8695. Through Aug. 14.

GALLERIES—DOWNTOWN

Yayoi Kusama—An exhibition of early works on paper by this protean, delicately gifted Japanese artist strengthens her steadily rising reputation. Dating to the early fifties, before Kusama came to New York, these small-format drawings range impressively from austere fields of black ink dots to brilliantly colored gouaches that hover between abstraction and figuration. Through Sept. 30. (Blum, 99 Wooster St. 343-0441.)

George Schreiber (1904-77) and **Fred Shane** (1906-90)—Two artists associated with Thomas Hart Benton and the American Regionalism movement visited L.A. during the thirties and forties, where they wittily observed the bizarre confluence of the glamorous and the banal. In Shane's tempera "Movie Props" (1945), two crewmen pause for lunch on the back lot, surrounded by a Roman chariot, a Venetian gondola, the half-timbered façade of a Norman house, and two monumental sculptures of pagan idols. Schreiber's watercolor of the Warner Bros. studio canteen, tingling with colorful life, shows Bogart, Lombard, and Lubitsch chowing down with bit players in costume and a terrifying caricature of Hedda Hopper, in whose hands a teacup is a deadly weapon. Through Aug. 27. (Teller, 568 Broadway. 941-7335.)

"Maps"—The world is a many-media'd thing, from James Turrell's wall-size topographical rendering of an earthwork project in which he reshaped the rim of an extinct volcano in Arizona to a tiny, enigmatic pair of black-and-white Warhol paintings that mapped Soviet missile bases in 1985. Jasper Johns is here, of course, represented by a mid-sixties lithograph of his iconic image of the contiguous forty-eight. A folkish embroidery of the world by Alighiero e Boetti fills in each country's space with a rendering of its flag; Eastern Europe and West Africa are tricky, and the great red glob of the U.S.S.R. with hammer and sickle already looks quaint. Buckminster Fuller's "Dymaxion Air-Ocean World Map" is as dry as its title but claims to be the first two-dimensional cartographical representation of the world in which the entire surface of the Earth can be viewed without distortion. Through Aug. 28. (Kasmin, 74 Grand St. 219-3219.)

"Pets"—Portraits and fantasias ("Fancy Pet," "Pet Grotesque," "Senior Pet," etc.) that artists have done of their animal companions. Through Aug. 13. (Keenan, 3 Crosby St. 431-5083.)

Group Show—Black and gray dominate this summer show: a recent David Salle mixes, with what might pass for wit, images of a snare drum, a giant rabbit, a woman shading her eyes from the sun, and a Ferragamo window display. Robert Rauschenberg's "Philosopher's Night Circus," unified by a black acrylic-and-enamel ground, creepily conveys an atmosphere of insomniac despair. Against these paintings and an elegant pattern piece by Philip Taaffe, the pair of David Smith constructions, dating to the early sixties, strikes an incongruously noble note. Through Aug. 28. (Gagosian, 136 Wooster St. 228-2828.)

Group Show—Feature remains one of the few SoHo galleries that can put together a surprising, eclectic summer bill of fare. Jeff Ono combines a high-formalist sensibility with conspicuously humble materials (straws, chewing gum). Scott Hug lives, like so many young artists, for trippy geometries. And Richard Hawkins's "Zombies" are disturbing evocations of teen (homo)erotic obsession gone over the brink: computer-generated heads of lusciously vacant boys. Through July 31. (76 Greene St. 941-7077.)

Short List—**ANN LOVETT,** Dorsky, 379 Broadway. 966-6170. Through Aug. 28. . . . **ALISON MORITSUGU,** Knowlton, 568 Broadway. 966-2625. Through Aug. 15. . . . **TOBIAS REHBERGER,** Petzel, 26 Wooster St. 334-9466. Through Aug. 28. . . . **TOMOKO TAKAHASHI,** The Drawing Center, 35 Wooster St. 219-2166. Through July 31. . . . **RICHARD TUTTLE,** A/D, 560 Broadway. 966-5154. Through July 31.

PHOTOGRAPHY

"Color"—Works by gallery artists Lynn Davis, Sally Mann, and Victor Schrager and guest artists Christopher Bucklow, Adam Fuss, and Dana Hoey. Through Aug. 14. (Houk, 745 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. 750-7070.)

"Drive-Ins: Disappearing Summer Cinema"—Featuring works by Jeff Brouws, Lee Friedlander, Richard Misrach, Andrew Moore, Lynn Saville, and Hiroshi Sugimoto. Through Aug. 7. (Richardson, 560 Broadway. 343-1255.)

"Modernist Mexican Vistas"—Photographs by Paul Strand, Anton Bruehl, and Marion Michelle. Through Aug. 1. (Throckmorton, 153 E. 61st St. 223-1059.)

"Neighborhood Watch"—Diverse takes on suburbia from Gregory Crewdson, Roe Etheridge, Arne Svenson, and others. Through Aug. 14. (Saul, 560 Broadway. 431-0747.)

"Ship/Shape"—Nautical imagery by such European and American photographers as Doris Ulmann, Edward Steichen, Harold Costain, and Edward Prince of Wales. Through Aug. 29. (DeLellis, 47 E. 68th St. 327-1482. Closed Tuesdays.)

"Summer Salon V (Pictures We Like)"—Featuring photographs by Sylvia Plachy, Adam Baer, William Gottlieb, and Lissie Habie. Through Aug. 28. (Benrubi, 52 E. 76th St. 517-3766.)

"A Summer Wedding"—Works by a broad range of artists, including Donna Ferrato, Charles Harbutt, Bruce Davidson, Andy Marcus, Mary Ellen Mark, and Edward Keating. Through Aug. 8. (Leica, 670 Broadway. 777-3051. Opens Saturdays at noon.)

"Sur la Tête"—Pictures that take the head as a focal point, by Edouard Boubat, Mario Cravo Neto, Michael von Graffenreid, and Graciela Iturbide. Through Aug. 28. (Witkin, 415 West Broadway. 925-5510.)

"Take the A Train"—A very large compendium of mostly black-and-white shots of the subways and trains of New York City by such photographers as Louis Faurer, William Klein, Louis Stettner, Walker Evans, Danny Lyon, and Helen Levitt. Through Aug. 14. (Greenberg, 120 Wooster St. 334-0010.)

"Walker Evans: The MoMA Murals" / "Counter Culture: The Diner in America"—Six mural-size prints made by the photographer for his 1971 museum retrospective. / Works by, among others, Garry Winogrand, William Klein, Weegee, and Ray K. Metzker. Both shows through Aug. 21. (Laurence Miller, 138 Spring St. 226-1220.)

"Women Travellers"—Works by nine adventurers, including Leah Demchick, Marina Karella, Carla Lippman, and Mai Duong. Through Sept. 5. (Staley-Wise, 560 Broadway. 966-6223.)

International Center of Photography—"Comparative Concepts: Photographs by August Sander, Karl Blossfeldt, Albert Renger-Patzsch, and Bernd and Hilla Becher." Through Sept. 13. (1130 Fifth Ave., at 94th St. 860-1777. Open daily, except Mondays, 11 to 6, and Tuesday evenings until 8.)

International Center of Photography Midtown—"Mathew Brady's Portraits: Images As History, Photography As Art," a travelling show of more than a hundred daguerreotypes, albumen prints, "Imperial" salted-paper prints, and cartes de visite. Through Sept. 6. . . . ¶ "A Bronx Family Album: The Impact of AIDS, by Steve Hart." Through Sept. 6. (Sixth Ave. at 43rd St. 860-1777. Open daily, except Mondays, 11 to 6, and Tuesday evenings until 8.)

Short List—**HERMAN COSTA,** Ricco/Maresca, 529 W. 20th St. 627-4819. Through Aug. 14. . . . **LUCIEN HERVÉ,** Gallery 292, at 120 Wooster St. 431-0292. Through Aug. 14. . . . **MICHAEL KENNA,** Mann, 42 E. 76th St. 570-1223. Through Aug. 14. . . . **NINA KORHONEN,** SABA, 116 E. 16th St. 477-7722. Through Aug. 31. . . . **ALEXANDER RODCHENKO,** Schickler, 560 Broadway. 431-6363. Through Aug. 14. . . . **JOSEF SUDEK,** Alan Klotz/Photocollect, 22 E. 72nd St. 327-2211. Through Aug. 1. *(See the museum listings for a photography exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art.)*

CLASSICAL MUSIC

OPERA

New York Grand Opera—Vincent La Selva conducts Verdi's "Rigoletto," fully staged, with soprano Yoko Ojima, tenor Antonio Buonauro, and baritone Raemond Martin. (Central Park SummerStage, Rumsey Playfield, mid-Park at 72nd St. July 29 at 7:30. No tickets necessary. For rain-date information, call 245-8837.)

ORCHESTRAS AND CHORUSES

New York Philharmonic—In the last of the orchestra's free concerts in the city's parks, Roberto Minczuk leads John Williams's "Summon the Heroes" (written for the 1996 Olympic Games, held in Atlanta), Oscar Lorenzo-Fernândez's "Batuque" (from his 1939 Brazilian folk-inflected suite "Reisado do Pastoreio"), Tchaikovsky's Serenade for Strings, and Dvořák's Symphony No. 8. (Prospect Park, Brooklyn. July 29. . . . ¶ Great Lawn, Central Park. July 30. . . . ¶ Miller Field, Gateway National Recreation Area, Staten Island. July 31. Evenings at 8, with fireworks following each performance. For rain-date information, call 875-5709.)

The Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, performing at Mostly Mozart.

ELVIS SWIFT

Mostly Mozart—July 29 at 8: Gerard Schwarz conducts the Mostly Mozart Festival Orchestra in Mozart's E-Flat-Major Piano Concerto (K. 271, with André Watts), a pair of his arias (with mezzo-soprano Angelika Kirchschlager), and his Symphony No. 41, as well as selections from Strauss's "Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme" and three of his orchestral songs (with Ms. Kirchschlager). (Avery Fisher Hall.) . . . ¶ July 29 at 8: Baritone Matthias Goerne, assisted by pianist Eric Schneider, offers an all-Schumann program that includes the "Liederkreis" (Op. 24). (Alice Tully Hall.) . . . ¶ July 30 at 8: The Emerson String Quartet plays Mozart's Quartet in D Major (K. 575) and his Clarinet Quintet (with David Shifrin), as well as Beethoven's Quartet in C Major (Op. 59, No. 3). (Avery Fisher Hall.) . . . ¶ July 31 at 8: Mr. Schwarz and the Mostly Mozart Festival Orchestra present Mozart's "Idomeneo" Overture, E-Flat-Major Piano Concerto (K. 482, with Alicia de Larrocha), and Violin Concerto No. 4 (with Tamaki Kawakubo), as well as Haydn's Symphony No. 81. (Avery Fisher Hall.) . . . ¶ Aug. 1 at 7:30: A concert performance of Mozart's 1781 opera seria, "Idomeneo," as revised and arranged by Richard Strauss and librettist Lothar Wallerstein for a 1931 Vienna State Opera production; with sopranos Christine Brewer and Olga Makarina, mezzo-soprano Angelika Kirchschlager, tenor Anthony Dean Griffey, the Riverside Choral Society, and the Mostly Mozart Festival Orchestra. Mr. Schwarz conducts. (Avery Fisher Hall.) . . . ¶ Aug. 2 at 3: Works by Beethoven (his Octet), Hummel, and Mozart (including his C-Minor Serenade), played by the Wind Soloists of the Chamber Orchestra of Europe. (Alice Tully Hall.) . . . ¶ Aug. 3 at 8: The Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, a period-instrument ensemble conducted by Paul Daniel, offers Mozart's two "city" symphonies—No. 31 (the "Paris") and No. 38 (the "Prague")—plus Chopin's Piano Concerto No. 2 (with the soloist, Emanuel Ax, performing on a nineteenth-century Erard). (Avery Fisher Hall.) . . . ¶ Aug. 4 at 8: Violinist Margaret Faultless leads the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment in a program that includes Vivaldi's "Il Gardellino" Concerto (with flutist Lisa Beznosiuk) and vocal works by Handel (with soprano Emma Kirkby). (Alice Tully Hall.) . . . ¶ Aug. 4-5 at 8: Louis Langree conducts the Mostly Mozart Festival Orchestra in Haydn's "La Isola Disabitata" Overture and D-Major Piano Concerto (featuring Leif Ove Andsnes), in addition to Mozart's Violin Concerto No. 5 (with Joshua Bell) and Symphony No. 40. (Avery Fisher Hall. . . . **NOTE:** Messrs. Bell and Andsnes offer a pre-concert recital, open to ticket holders, both evenings at 7.) . . . **NOTE, TOO:** On most evenings at 6, in Alice Tully Hall, Mostly Mozart is presenting a series of hour-long concerts given over to groundbreaking quartets by Haydn. This week's installments are performed by the Takács String Quartet (July 29-Aug. 2) and the Emperor String Quartet (Aug. 4). (For information about tickets for all Mostly Mozart events, call 721-6500.)

RECITALS

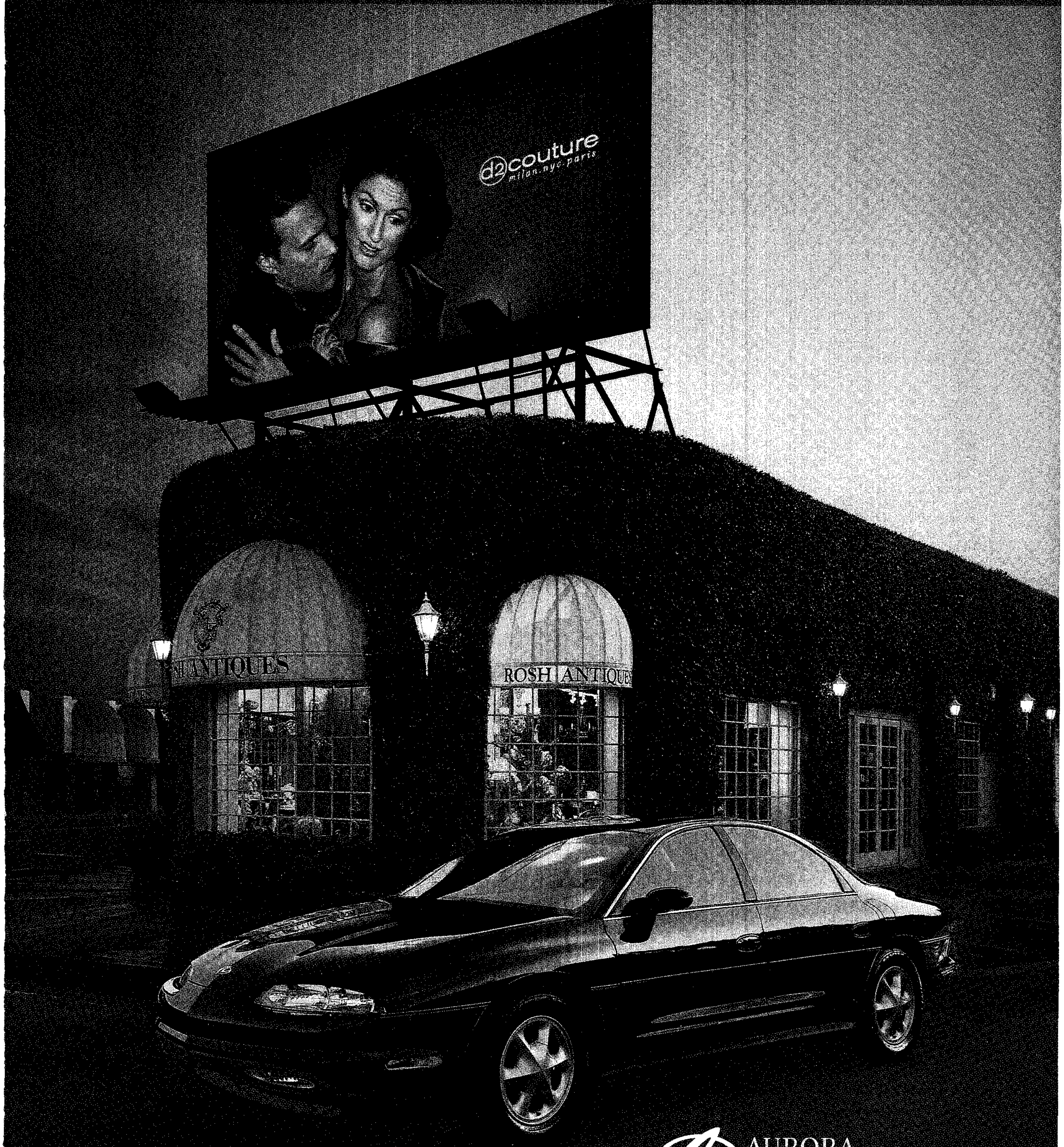
"Music in the Garden"—In the final installment of the Church of the Holy Trinity's outdoor picnic-and-concert series, violinist Hiroko Taguchi, cellist Allen Alexander, and pianist Steven Huter perform chamber works by Hummel, Saint-Saëns, Copland, and Mr. Huter. (316 E. 88th St. July 29 at 7:15. Admission by contribution.)

Continuum—The contemporary-music group plays works by four Russian modernists: Sofia Gubaidulina's "Dancer on a Tightrope," Edison Denisov's "Ode (In Memory of Che Guevara)," Alfred Schnittke's Piano Quartet, and Galina Ustvolskaya's Symphony No. 5 ("Amen"). (Trinity Church, Broadway at Wall St. July 30 at 1. No tickets necessary.)

Bargemusic—July 30 at 7:30 and Aug. 2 at 4: Cellist Peter Rejto and pianist Rick Rowley perform sonatas by Kodály, Beethoven (in A Major), and Shostakovich, as well as Janáček's "Pohadka." . . . ¶ July 31 at 7:30: Hindemith's "Variations on 'A Frog He Went A-Courting'" and sonatas by Fauré (in A Major) and Rachmaninoff, performed by cellist Mina Smith and pianist Pedja Muzijevic. (Fulton Ferry Landing, Brooklyn. 718-624-4061.)

Accordion Mania—For three summers now, accordion aficionados have gathered in New York for a full weekend of recitals, master classes, lectures, and shoptalk organized by the avant-garde accordionist William Schimmel. This year's proceedings emphasize the instrument's use in circuses and carnivals. Among the burning issues to be addressed are "Fellini, Tati, and the Accordion," "Clowning with Your Accordion," and

ALLURE.


d2couture
milan.nyc.paris
ANTIQUES
ROSH ANTIQUES

AURORA

DEFY CONVENTION

aerodynamic steel skin · carved haunches · sculpted tail · V8/250hp

GM ©1997 GM Corp. All rights reserved.

1-800-255-OLDS www.auroracar.com Oldsmobile

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"Will Chamame Replace the Tango?" (the chamame, for those who haven't heard, being a tango-esque genre in three-quarter time that's popular in hip Argentine circles). Each day concludes with a recital at 7. July 31: A program that includes the première of Akemi Naito's "Sanctuary" and a staged performance of Mr. Schimmel's "Psychiatric Records." . . . ¶ Aug. 1: Works of Yiddish, Russian, and Brazilian inspiration. . . . ¶ Aug. 2: A recital that includes performances by Mr. Schimmel and pianist Michael Sahl, co-founders of the acclaimed group The Tango Project. (Tenri Cultural Institute, 575 Broadway, at Prince St. For schedule details and information about tickets, call 876-0827.)

Summergarden—Music for mixed chamber ensembles comes to the fore in this installment of the Museum of Modern Art's series exploring twentieth-century music composed in New York City. The program comprises pieces by Lois V Vierk, Fred Lerdahl, Michael Torke, Morton Feldman, and David Del Tredici. (Museum of Modern Art, Sculpture Garden, 14 W. 54th St. July 31-Aug. 1 at 8:30. No tickets necessary.)

Latica Honda-Rosenberg—At the end of June, this German violinist was awarded second prize at the 1998 Tchaikovsky International Competition, with critics citing in particular her subtle tonal nuances and dazzling bow work. In these concerts she performs Franck's Violin Sonata, among other works. Pianist Avner Arad assists. (Le Refuge Inn, 620 City Island Ave., City Island, the Bronx. Aug. 2 at noon. For information about tickets, call 718-885-2478. . . . ¶ Hotel Wales, Madison Ave. at 92nd St. Aug. 2 at 6 and 8. No tickets necessary. . . . ¶ Mansfield Hotel, 12 W. 44th St. Aug. 3 at 8. No tickets necessary.)

OUT OF TOWN

Tanglewood—July 29 at 8:30: The Emerson String Quartet plays Beethoven's Quartets in B-Flat Major (Op. 18, No. 6) and C-Sharp Minor (Op. 131), as well as Wolfgang Rihm's Quartet No. 4. . . . ¶ July 30 at 8:30: The Wind Soloists of the Chamber Orchestra of Europe, with pianist Leif Ove Andsnes, perform solo and chamber works by Sándor Veress, Poulenc, Debussy, Britten, and Beethoven (his Quintet for Piano and Winds). . . . ¶ July 31 at 8:30: Robert Spano leads the Boston Symphony in Bernstein's Symphony No. 2 ("Age of Anxiety," with pianist John Browning) and Beethoven's Symphony No. 7. . . . ¶ Aug. 1 at 8:30: Tanglewood's annual Leonard Bernstein Memorial Concert features that composer's "Songfest," as well as Beethoven's "Leonore" Overture No. 3 and Stravinsky's "Le Sacre du Printemps." Seiji Ozawa, Mr. Spano, and Joel Smirnoff take turns at the podium of the Tanglewood Music Center Orchestra. The soloists in the Bernstein are soprano Sheri Greenawald, mezzo-sopranos Luretta Bybee and Joyce Castle, tenor Richard Clement, baritone Kurt Ollmann, and bass Michael Devlin. . . . ¶ Aug. 2 at 2:30: James DePreist leads the Boston Symphony in Bernstein's Symphony No. 1 ("Jeremiah," featuring mezzo-soprano Florence Quivar), Saint-Saëns's Piano Concerto No. 2 (with André Watts), and Brahms's Symphony No. 2. . . . ¶ Aug. 4 at 8:30: Mr. Ozawa, John Williams, and Keith Lockhart share the conducting duties in the annual "Tanglewood on Parade" concert, featuring the Boston Symphony and the Tanglewood Music Center Orchestra. The program comprises Beethoven's "Leonore" Overture No. 3, Gershwin's Lullaby for String Orchestra, Bernstein's "Three Dance Episodes from 'On the Town,'" excerpts from Mr. Williams's scores for the films "Saving Private Ryan" and "Hook," and Tchaikovsky's "1812" Overture. (Lenox, Mass. 800-274-8499.)

Caramoor—July 30 at 4:15: Pianist Hélène Grimaud performs the Bach-Busoni D-Minor Chaconne, Beethoven's Sonata No. 30 (Op. 109), and Brahms's Sonata No. 2. . . . ¶ July 31 at 8: Beethoven's Piano Sonata No. 31, Debussy's "Children's Corner," and Schumann's Symphonic Études, performed by Stella Simakova. . . . ¶ Aug. 2 at 4:30: The Emerson String Quartet performs Beethoven's B-Flat-Major Quartet (Op. 18, No. 6), Edgar Meyer's String Quintet (with Mr. Meyer assisting as double-bassist), and Schubert's "Trout" Quintet (with Mr. Meyer and pianist Menahem Pressler). (Katonah, N.Y. 914-232-1252.)

Glimmerglass Opera—July 30 at 8 and Aug. 3 at 2: "Falstaff." . . . ¶ July 31 at 8 and Aug. 2 at 2: Handel's "Partenope," with soprano Lisa Saffer and countertenor David Daniels. . . . ¶ Aug. 1 at 1:30 and Aug. 4 at 2: "Tosca." . . . ¶ Aug. 1 at 8: Virgil Thomson's "The Mother of Us All." (Cooperstown, N.Y. 607-547-2255.)

Maverick Concerts—Aug. 1 at 8: Baroque flutist Wendy Rolfe and harpsichordist Christa Rakich offer sonatas by J. S. Bach, Handel, Michael Blavet, Domenico Scarlatti, and C. P. E. Bach. . . . ¶ Aug. 2 at 3: Violinist Charles Libove and pianist Nina Lugovoy perform sonatas by Saint-Saëns (his First) and Beethoven (in A Minor, Op. 23); colleagues join them in Fauré's C-Minor Piano Quartet. (Woodstock, N.Y. 914-679-8217.)

Music Mountain—The Paris-based Ludwig String Quartet offers a pair of concerts. Aug. 1 at 8: Quartets by Brahms (his Third) and Beethoven (in G Major, Op. 18, No. 2), plus Fauré's C-Minor Piano Quintet (with Samuel Bartos assisting). . . . ¶ Aug. 2 at 3: Ravel's String Quartet, Beethoven's Quartet in F Minor (Op. 95), and (with Pedja Muzijevic) Franck's Piano Quintet. (Falls Village, Conn. 860-824-7126.)

ABOVE AND BEYOND

Not So Tall Ships—The eighth annual New York Ship & Boat Model Festival brings more than a hundred steam-powered canal boats, nineteenth-century British warships, aircraft carriers, classic sailing yachts, and other craft to the South Street Seaport Museum, Aug. 1-2, from 1 to 5. And although the miniatures won't be bobbing in the East River, they will be making waves, in an eighteen-by-thirty-three-foot oval pool. Veteran model builder Murray Cukier, who crafted his first ship in 1928, when he was fourteen, will be on hand to talk about working with cardboard, wood, and wire, and about the twenty of his models which have just gone on display at the museum. For more information, call 748-8600.

Helpful Entertainment—In connection with the exhibition "Uniting Neighbors: The Role of Settlement Houses in New York City," members of the Lenox Hill Neighborhood House, the Educational Alliance, the Jacob Riis Neighborhood Settlement, and other charitable organizations present dramatic productions, dance routines, and song. (New-York Historical Society, 2 W. 77th St., at Central Park W. 873-3400. July 29, from noon to 2.)

Readings—July 29 at 6: By novelists Peter Carey, Jim Lewis, and Lawrence Chua, from their recent work. (Borders Books and Music, Park Ave. at 57th St. No tickets necessary.) . . . ¶ July 30 at 7:30: By Max Blagg, from his novel in progress, "Diving for Blondes." (S. J. South & Sons, 273 Church St., between Franklin and White Sts. For reservations, call 693-0405.) . . . ¶ July 30 at 8:30: By liberal gadfly Michael Moore, National Public Radio commentator Andrei Codrescu, and novelist Ruth Ozeki. (Central Park SummerStage, Rumsey Playfield, mid-Park at 72nd St. No tickets necessary.) . . . ¶ Aug. 3 at 7: By screenwriter Stephen Schiff, from his take on Nabokov, "Lolita: The Book of the Film." (Barnes & Noble, Broadway at 66th St. No tickets necessary.)

Talk—July 29 at 7: Just in time to deal with the impact of the city's new zoning restrictions on sex shops, Thomas Moore, author of "The Soul of Sex," shows how mythology, literature, and religion can lead to more fun in bed. (The Lighthouse, 111 E. 59th St. For reservations, which are required, call 371-0280.)

BOOK CURRENTS

Hunger Pangs

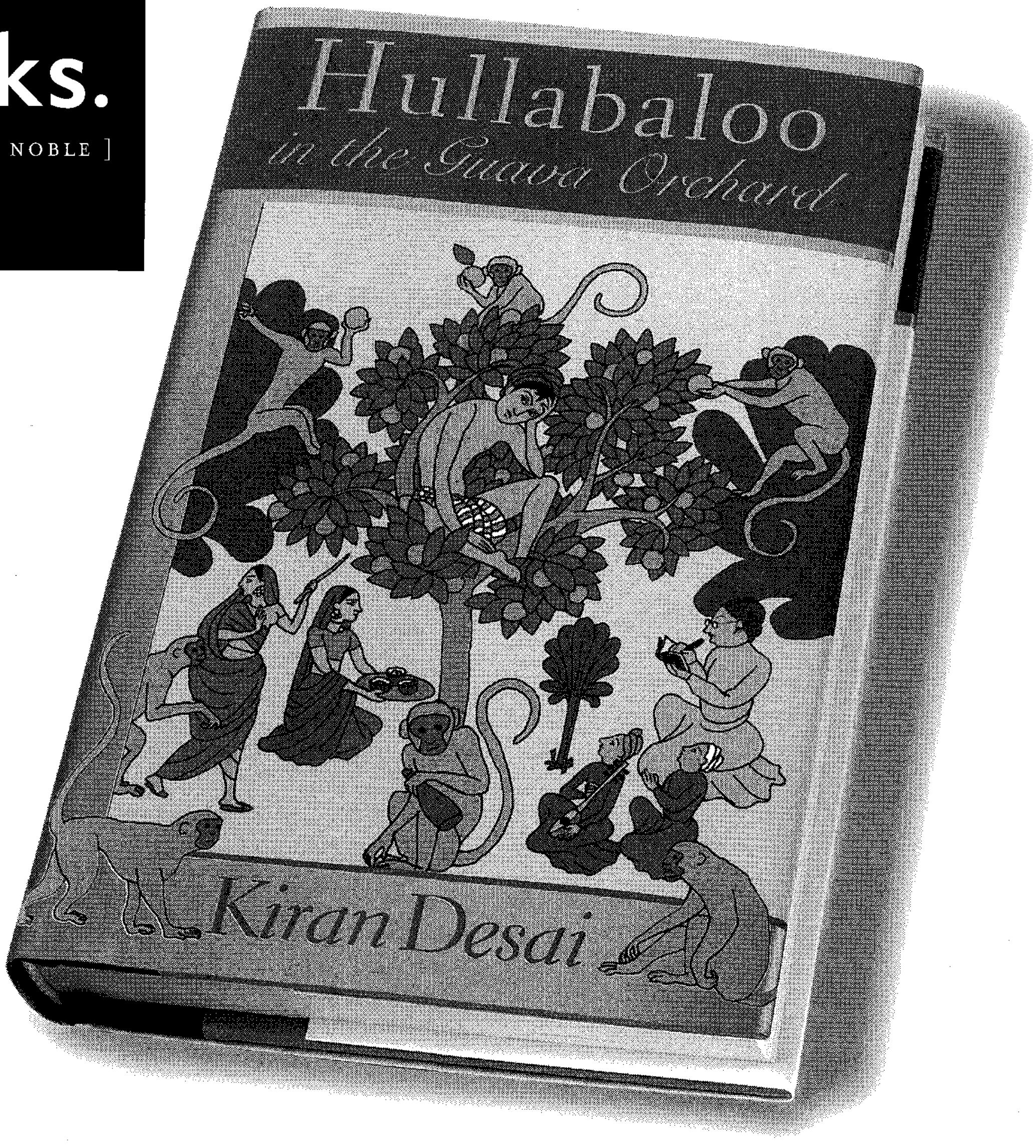
Nora Ephron's early-eighties novel "Heartburn," about a cookbook writer who discovers that her husband is cheating on her, was studded with recipes for things like bread pudding and peach pie—the kind of soothing food that a woman with a bitter taste in her mouth might crave. The latest books about women preoccupied with food, however, suggest a sexual appetite that makes Ephron's novel seem as outdated as a ladyfinger. In **Aphrodite: A Memoir of the Senses** (Harper Flamingo), Isabel Allende instructs readers on the best kind of soup to serve at an orgy and details the aphrodisiac properties of, among other things, honey, mangoes, and shellfish. It's a book that would appeal to the narrator in the title story of **Hungry** (Crown), a first collection by Joanna Torrey. This disillusioned secretary embarks on a one-night stand while eating Belon and Wellfleet oysters at the Oyster Bar in Grand Central Terminal. She admires the voluptuousness of her meal: "When you ordered a dozen oysters, they served them in a huge iron shell, the oysters nestled into a mound of shaved ice like separate gifts." Later, in the hotel room, a banana comes into play—somewhat less elegantly.

Judith Moore, in her memoir **Never Eat Your Heart Out** (North Point Press), recounts how the meals she served to her husband and two daughters changed after she began an affair: "I dared myself beyond rib roasts and sweating pork butts and pineapple-and-clove-stuck hams." She enters a period of culinary experimentation—mille-feuilles, eggplant soufflé, crème caramel—but then her betrayal is discovered, her family is devastated, and it's years before she can cook again. Ruby Lee, the protagonist of Mei Ng's début novel, **Eating Chinese Food Naked** (Scribner), revisits her mother's table when she moves back home after college. But she has conflicts with her Chinese-American identity, struggles she sees reflected in the food she eats—the chicken feet her mother favors versus the Entenmann's cakes at her neighborhood deli—and her confusion seeps into her sex-heavy dream life: "She dreamed she was eating dog. It was roasted and chewy. Later, she dreamed she was having sex with her mother." So much for comfort food.

WALTER MINUS

Books.

[AT BARNES & NOBLE]



HULLABALOO IN THE GUAVA ORCHARD

by Kiran Desai

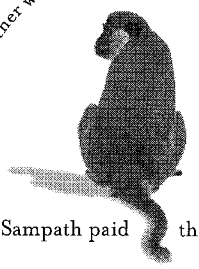
In her dazzling debut novel that the *New York Times* calls "a finely tuned fable," Kiran Desai tells a wryly hilarious and poignant tale of life, love, and family relationships. *Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard* is the story of Sampath Chawla, who, after years of failure at school and at work, climbs into a guava tree in search of peace and unexpectedly becomes famous as a holy man. (Atlantic Monthly Press)

Publisher's Price: $22.00

Discount **30%**

B&N Price $15.40

DISCOVER
GREAT•NEW•WRITERS



"'He's in another world,' whispered the devotees reverently, while Sampath paid them no attention..."

– Excerpt from
Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard –

barnesandnoble.com

VISIT OUR STORES OR ONLINE | AOL KEYWORD: BARNESANDNOBLE

CALL 1-800-THE BOOK℠ FOR STORE LOCATIONS OR TO ORDER BOOKS

© 1998 Barnes & Noble, Inc.

Price effective at store locations through 8/12/98

RHINO

What's missing from your record collection?

"Now I've got everything I need — except maybe a Golf Channel album."
-Jim Hughes, actual Rhino Employee

Explore a whole new world of music with three new releases from Rhino and The Discovery Channel.

- ***Animal Planet: Sing With The Animals:*** **animal-themed songs for kids and parents.**
- ***Discovery Channel: Great Chefs' Dinner Music:*** **soft jazz from greats like Coltrane and Ray Charles.**
- ***Travel Channel: Songs From Around The World:*** **today's best world music.**

available at BORDERS®
BOOKS, MUSIC, VIDEO, AND A CAFE.

www.rhino.com

New York's favorite bookstore

Over a million used & out-of-print books

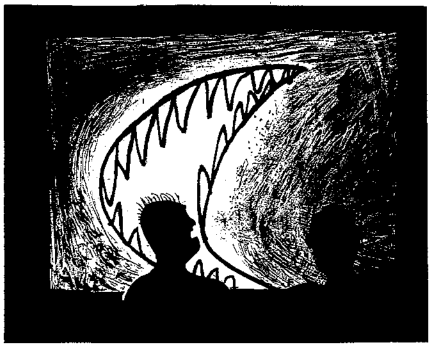
800•878•7323

www.powells.com

COUNTRY WALKERS
19 Years of excellence in Worldwide Walking Vacations
◆ *Europe, Africa, North & South America and the South Pacific*
Free catalog call 800-464-9255
www.countrywalkers.com

World's Finest Wooden Watercraft
Parmain Boatworks
Box 3955 Sarasota, FL 34230
888.779.5979 FAX 888.881.5979
www Parmain.com

THE MOVIES



OPENINGS

BASEketball—David Zucker's comedy stars Trey Parker and Matt Stone as the inventors of a new ballgame. Opening July 31. (Criterion Center and First & 62nd Cinemas.)

Full Tilt Boogie—A documentary, by Sarah Kelly, about the making of Robert Rodriguez's "From Dusk till Dawn." Opening July 31. (Angelika Film Center.)

The Governess—A drama about a young Jewish woman (Minnie Driver) in nineteenth-century England who passes herself off as a Protestant in order to get a job in Scotland. Directed by Sandra Goldbacher. Opening July 31. (Paris.)

Killer Condom—The comic story of a condom run amok, directed by Martin Walz. In German. Opening July 31. (Cinema Village.)

The Negotiator—Samuel L. Jackson and Kevin Spacey star in this thriller about a hostage taker and a police-department negotiator. Directed by F. Gary Gray. Opening July 29. (Chelsea Cinemas, Criterion Center, 84th Street Sixplex, Orpheum VII, 64th and 2nd, 34th Street Showplace, and Village East Cinemas.)

Out of the Past—Reviewed below in Film Notes. Opening July 31.

The Parent Trap—A remake of the 1961 Disney film about long-separated identical twins who scheme to reunite their divorced parents. Directed by Nancy Meyers; with Dennis Quaid, Natasha Richardson, and Lindsay Lohan as the twins. Opening July 29. (Cinema 3rd Avenue and Guild.)

Seventh Heaven—Benoît Jacquot's tale of a triangle that includes a wife (Sandrine Kiberlain), her husband (Vincent Lindon), and her therapist (François Berléand). In French. Opening July 31. (Quad Cinema.)

FILM NOTES

(If a movie has been reviewed recently in The Current Cinema, the date of its review is given.)

Armageddon—"The Right Stuff" meets "The Dirty Dozen" in a frenzy of special effects and ear-shattering detonations. An asteroid "the size of Texas" is speeding toward our fair planet, and unless it's nuked within eighteen days we'll all be saying good night, world. NASA's executive director (Billy Bob Thornton) devises a plan to drill a hole in the asteroid and blast it from the inside. Enter Bruce Willis, as Harry S. Stamper, "the world's best deep-core driller," who recruits a crew of roughnecks, including Ben Affleck and Steve Buscemi, to do the job. Willis, with his imperturbable gaze and incessant smirk, doesn't seem a natural choice for even a scruffy hero like Harry, but Affleck demonstrates a sexy Paul Newmanish charm. The surprisingly witty script was worked on by a squadron of writers, including Robert Towne.—*Daphne Merkin* (7/13/98) (Chelsea Cinemas, 84th Street Sixplex, Embassy 2, Murray Hill Cinemas, Olympia, Orpheum VII, Sutton, and Village Theatre VII.)

East Palace, West Palace—In a park in a Chinese city, the cops roust the young gay men who gather there. When they are apart from the others, A-Lan suddenly gives the policeman escorting him a kiss on the cheek and jogs off, looking playfully over his shoulder. The conflicted look on the cop's face pretty much tells us where this picture is heading. The cop comes back a few days later, this time out of uniform (but in a leather jacket), brings A-Lan back to the empty police station, and a nightlong interrogation ensues. Or is it a seduction? And who's seducing whom? Is the cop looking for a confession or a turn-on? Do the long silences denote menace or just a paucity of plot? Director Zhang Yuan's feature erupts in a flash of passion, but the payoff isn't worth the wait. In Chinese.—*Ken Marks* (Quad Cinema.)

E.T. The Extra-Terrestrial (1982)—Steven Spielberg's movie is bathed in warmth, and it seems to clear all the bad thoughts out of your head. It's the story of a ten-year-old boy, Elliott, who feels fatherless and lost because his parents have separated, and who finds a miraculous friend—an alien inadvertently left on Earth by a visiting spaceship. This fusion of science fiction and mythology is emotionally rounded and complete; it reminds you of the goofiest dreams you had as a kid, and rehabilitates them. The stars are Henry Thomas, as Elliott, and E.T., who was designed by Carlo Rambaldi.—*Pauline Kael* (American Museum of the Moving Image; Aug. 1-2.)

Hail the Conquering Hero (1944)—If you've never seen one of Preston Sturges's classic comedies, you may not quite know what hit you. He uses verbal slapstick as well as visual slapstick, and his timing is so quirkily effective that the dialogue keeps popping off, like a string of firecrackers. In this satire on hero worship, patriotism, and mother love, Eddie Bracken, son of his town's biggest First World War hero, joins the Marines in the Second World War and is discharged for hay fever. Ashamed, he writes his mother that he's been sent overseas, and thinking he can never return home, tells his girl (Ella Raines) that he doesn't love her anymore. But one night he's out drinking with six Marines, and one of them, known as Bugsy, for a good reason, tells him he should go home and see his beautiful mother; the sergeant agrees, and the upshot is that they drag him home, claiming that he's a war hero. The town goes mad. With Freddie Steele, once middleweight boxing champion of the world, as Bugsy, William Demarest as the sergeant, and Raymond Walburn, Esther Howard, Elizabeth Patterson, Jimmy Conlin, Franklin Pangborn, Chester Conklin, Paul Porcasi, Dewey Robinson, and Arthur Hoyt. Sturges wrote and directed.—*P.K.* (Film Forum 2; July 31-Aug. 3.)

Lethal Weapon 4—This Warner Bros. franchise is so depressingly familiar that the brief time spent on reintroducing the old-timers—Mel Gibson's manic cop, Danny Glover's L.A.P.D. family man, Joe Pesci's foulmouthed sidekick—comes as a relief. The negligible plot (it has something to do with counterfeiting) is poorly paced, and there's nothing much to do but watch how director Richard Donner sets up his stunt-filled action bits. It's take-the-money-and-run filmmaking, with the actors practically winking their dialogue at each other, and it's all supposed to be tongue-in-cheek fun. It isn't.—*Bruce Diones* (Astor Plaza, Coronet Cinemas, Lincoln Square, Metro Cinema, Murray Hill Cinemas, 19th Street East 6, Orpheum VII, and Village Theatre VII.)

Madeline—Ludwig Bemelmans's classic stories of a plucky little girl in Paris inspired this cute but timid screen version. The movie missteps by overemphasizing an Edwardian-era plot, in which Madeline (the appropriately tiny and adorable Hatty Jones) has to win over a grumpy old rich man (Nigel Hawthorne). On top of that, there's the problem that always arises when a cartoon child is embodied in the flesh. A fantasy drawing who constantly gets into scrapes is lovable; a real child who does so seems troubled and in need of help. Frances McDormand is strong, in the Eve Arden tradition, as Miss Clavel, the maternal, overworked nun who runs Madeline's school. Daisy von Scherler Mayer directed with laid-back charm and a frustrating lack of focus.—*Sarah Kerr* (Chelsea Cinemas, Criterion Center, Lincoln Square, 64th and 2nd, and Waverly.)

Mark Twain's America—Stephen Low's diminutive 3-D documentary about our greatest humorist should be given credit for at least achieving an element of surprise: what other movie director has had the courage to hurl an author at his audience instead of an asteroid? The movie, which clocks in at just under an hour and uses nineteenth-century photography as well as scenes with contemporary Twain groupies to illustrate a selection of readings from some of the author's best-known works, is given a Southern-fried narration by an actor who apparently thinks that the bewhiskered man in the white suit is Colonel Sanders. Many of the stills—from a portrait of two black children with the aged look of prisoners to a shot of vagrant watermelon pickers eating their pay—uncomfortably invade your space. A close encounter with a champion jumping frog that can bound twenty feet almost makes the nose ache from the Imax goggles worth it.—*Jay Fielden* (Lincoln Square.)

The Mask of Zorro—Antonio Banderas cuts a dashing figure as Johnston McCulley's Robin Hood-like hero, but director Martin Campbell's lumpy direction doesn't coalesce into anything much beyond a pleasant assembly of set pieces. Still, there are some wonderful moments, particularly Banderas's rousing swordplay-as-foreplay scenes with his gorgeous co-star, Catherine Zeta-Jones, and his flamboyantly choreographed duelling scenes with the glinty-eyed Anthony Hopkins, who trains Banderas like a Jedi Knight.—*B.D.* (84th Street Sixplex, 19th Street East 6, Olympia, Orpheum VII, 64th and 2nd, State, 34th Street Showplace, and Village East Cinemas.)

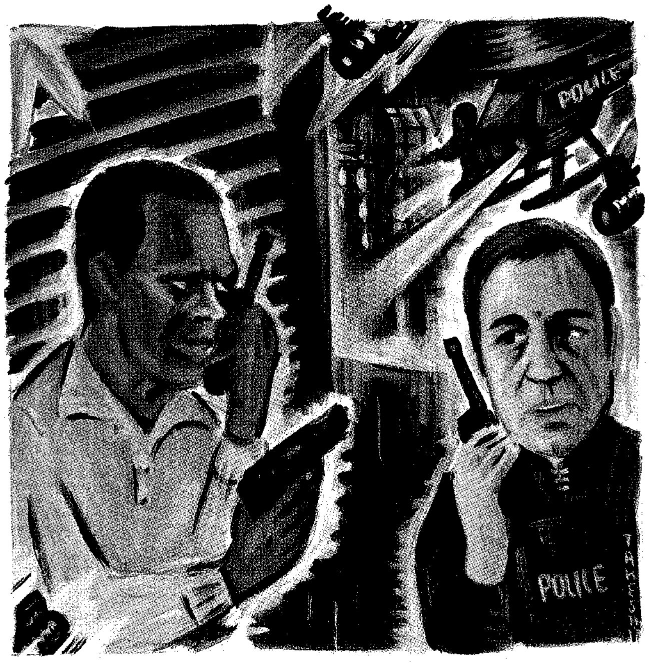
Mulan—Disney takes it easy on the hype this time, allowing its latest summer animated picture to build its own fan base. It's a canny decision, and the story, based on a Chinese legend, is clever: a young girl cuts her hair, joins the army disguised as a man, and saves China from the Huns. It gives boys lots of exciting (if cross-dressed) action, and lets girls root for an empowering hero. While the movie sticks to the familiar Disney formula, the cute sidekicks are less intrusive and the songs are not as overbearing as usual; for the most part, it sustains an enjoyable hum.—*B.D.* (Chelsea Cinemas, Embassy 3, Lincoln Square, Sutton, and Village East Cinemas.)

Out of Sight—After many mishaps, the art of bringing Elmore Leonard's novels to the screen is coming to fruition. This latest adaptation, by director Steven Soderbergh and screenwriter Scott Frank, gets it just about right. George Clooney, a kindly bank robber, breaks out of jail and into the life of Karen Sisco (Jennifer Lopez), who is, if you are prepared to believe it, a U.S. marshal. He kidnaps her, then releases her, after which she turns the tables and spends the rest of the movie looking for him. This being Leonard country, the two leads are required to go to bed with each other before the final shootout; the sex itself is the one point of visual sloppiness in a movie that is otherwise crisp and smartly edited, full of bleached Miami sunshine and leaden snowstorms in Detroit.—*Anthony Lane* (7/6/98) (Art Greenwich Twin, Chelsea Cinemas, First & 62nd Cinemas, Lincoln Square, Park & 86th Street Cinemas, State, and 34th Street Showplace.)

Out of the Past—Director Jeff Dupre's solid documentary on the gay community is one part history lesson (profiles of obscure gay and lesbian historical figures) and one part smart reporting (a young lesbian attempts to form a Gay-Straight Alliance club in Salt Lake City). The film, written by Michelle Ferrari, is a dialogue between the past and the present, and an emotionally textured treatise on alienation and marginalization which is intelligent and, thankfully, entertaining.—*B.D.* (The Screening Room; starting July 31.)

π—This super-low-budget début by Darren Aronofsky is a noir-like metaphysical sci-fi flick, shot in grainy black and white, about a mathematical genius who believes he's found a formula that describes the chaos of the stock market. He's pursued by Wall Street thugs and, in true crackpot absurdity, a Cabala sect that believes he's unlocked a secret of the Scriptures. Aronofsky's delirious, Kafkaesque writing and imaginatively distorted camerawork don't quite add up, but it's fascinating, hallucinogenic film work.—*B.D.* (Angelika Film Center.)

Preston Sturges: The Rise and Fall of an American Dreamer (1989)—In its speed, flavor, and bounce—in everything except its conventionality—this seventy-three-minute documentary is an apt tribute to Sturges, the writer-director-producer who swept past his competitors in forties Hollywood farce like a cartoon whirlwind. Kenneth Bowser portrays Sturges as a king of comedy who wore his crown at a rakish tilt—making it easier for studio bosses and moneymen to knock it off his head. You may wish for a more detailed view of Sturges's movies, but Todd McCarthy's script is knowing and informed; it notes, for example, that when the moviemaker became a partner in Howard Hughes's California Pictures Corporation, the deal linked "Sturges, inventor of kiss-proof lipstick, with Hughes, creator of the aerodynamic bra."—*Michael Sragow* (Film Forum 2; Aug. 4.)



Samuel L. Jackson and Kevin Spacey in "The Negotiator."

TAKESHI TADATSU

Saving Private Ryan—Reviewed this week in The Current Cinema. (Chelsea West, Lincoln Square, Metro Cinema, Murray Hill Cinemas, New York Twin, Orpheum VII, Village Theatre VII, and Ziegfeld.)

SlamNation—If you enjoy standup comedy, rock and roll, group improv, rap, or MTV, you may be amused by Paul Devlin's documentary about the team poetry competitions that culminated in the 1996 finals in Portland, Oregon. If you're a lover of poetry, all bets are off. On display are the "adrenaline junkies of the literary world," as one contestant describes himself and his fellow-practitioners. Energy, rhythm, and aggressive wordplay are the prime components; subtlety, introspection, and elegance are for other voices, other rooms. Taylor Mali of Team Providence is particularly entertaining, a loudmouthed ironist out for the poetic kill. (Live performances precede the 8 P.M. and 10 P.M. showings on Fridays and Saturdays.)—*K.M.* (Film Forum.)

Small Soldiers—Joe Dante recycles his blueprint from "Gremlins," using animatronic toy soldiers, but there's no magic this time. The story—about a military chip placed inside children's toys which brings them to gung-ho life—is promising, but the film lacks any true style. The actors (among them Phil Hartman and Kirsten Dunst) don't have much to do but react to the mayhem, while the toys' dialogue wastes the talents of an unusually rich cast of voices that includes Tommy Lee Jones, Christopher Guest, and Christina Ricci. Stan Winston and his special-effects team do a spectacular job, and Dante gets a few perverse laughs (there's a wonderful scene in which some Barbie-like dolls are turned into Brides of Frankenstein), but the awkward tone—sometimes funny, sometimes wicked—deflates the excitement.—*B.D.* (Chelsea Cinemas, Criterion Center, East 85th Street, and 84th Street Sixplex.)

Sullivan's Travels (1941)—Preston Sturges's comedy about a popular—slightly fatuous—Hollywood director (Joel McCrea), who feels that his hits, such as "Ants in Your Plants of 1939," aren't worthy of a war-devastated world. To research his next project, a relevant film to be called "O Brother, Where Art Thou?," he gets dressed as a tramp and goes out to investigate the lower depths. Sturges is more at home in slapstick irony (as in "The Lady Eve") than in the mixed tones of this comedy-melodrama, but it's a memorable film nevertheless. With Veronica Lake, underacting with perfect composure, Margaret Hayes and many of the actors Sturges delighted in and used repeatedly—William Demarest, Franklin Pangborn, Eric Blore, Monte Blue, and others. Sturges himself can be glimpsed behind Veronica Lake on a set inside the movie studio.—*P.K.* (Film Forum 2; July 31-Aug. 3.)

There's Something About Mary—The Farrelly Brothers, who have tipped the outrageousness scale before ("Dumb and Dumber," "Kingpin"), come up with some great new gross-out gags in this romantic comedy. The star, Cameron Diaz, in her Olivia Newton-John haircut, is the perfect naïve foil—she looks like she never knows what hit her. As the two loopy guys who are in love with her, Matt Dillon and Ben Stiller are garishly charming and full of desperate and irreverent ploys to get the girl. The film is packed with tasteless jokes (the best of them are crudely sexual), and it has a refreshing mean-spiritedness.—*B.D.* (Chelsea Cinemas, Criterion Center, First & 62nd Cinemas, Lincoln Square, Orpheum VII, 34th Street Showplace, and Village East Cinemas.)

The Thief—Considering that Pavel Chukhrai's movie is set in the Soviet Union in the early nineteen-fifties, it's pretty easy to watch. The center of events is a young boy (Misha Philipchuk), whose mother takes up with a tall, dark, and handsomely immoral soldier called Tolyan (Vladimir Mashkov). The three of them scoot from one set of lodgings to the next, armed with little but a sack of

QU'EST-CE QUE L'HYPNOSE?

Opening July 31, Sandrine Kiberlain and François Berléand in "Seventh Heaven."

stolen silverware; the movie is, among other things, a dark Dickensian comedy of the nomadic—of the need to live on one's wits. Despite the blue eyes of his hero, Chukhrai just about avoids the pitfalls of cuteness, and there is no mistaking his instinct for the stray anecdote and swollen minor characters. As the film moves, rather too hastily, toward its resolution, you might feel cheated by a sense of emotional patness; for the most part, however, there is real grit and sting in this slight tale. In Russian.—*A.L.* (7/20/98) (Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

Western—French New New Wave director Manuel Poirier's charming road movie, in which a Mutt and Jeff pair of guys yo-yo their way up and down the coast of Brittany. ("Western" won the Grand Jury prize at Cannes last year.) Paco (Sergi López), a Spanish shoe salesman, picks up a shiftless Russian hitchhiker, Nino (Sacha Bourdo, in his first film role), who soon contrives to steal his car. When Paco finally catches up with Nino, he pounds the crap out of him. Naturally, he feels remorse, and when Nino gets out of the hospital the two become road buddies. Their picaresque misadventures take them genially through the polycultural France that was evident during the World Cup matches, and, if the women they meet along the way all tend to be windswept Meryl Streep types, where's the harm in that? In French.—*Jeff Gustavson* (Lincoln Plaza Cinemas and Quad Cinema.)

ALSO PLAYING

UN AIR DE FAMILLE: Eastside Playhouse. . . . **BILLY'S HOLLYWOOD SCREEN KISS** (reviewed in our issue of 7/27/98): Angelika Film Center, First & 62nd Cinemas, 19th Street East 6, and 62nd & Broadway. . . . **BUFFALO '66:** Angelika Film Center, Cinema II, and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas. . . . **DISTURBING BEHAVIOR:** Art Greenwich Twin, Chelsea Cinemas, 84th Street Sixplex, First & 62nd Cinemas, Orpheum VII, and State. . . . **DR. DOLITTLE:** Criterion Center, First & 62nd Cinemas, Lincoln Square, 19th Street East 6, and Park & 86th Street Cinemas. . . . **HAV PLENTY:** Worldwide Cinemas. . . . **HOPE FLOATS:** Worldwide Cinemas. . . . **MAFIA!:** Chelsea Cinemas, Cinema I, Embassy 1, Lincoln Square, Murray Hill Cinemas, and Village East Cinemas. . . . **NIGHTS OF CABIRIA:** Lincoln Plaza Cinemas and Quad Cinema. . . . **THE OPPOSITE OF SEX:** Angelika Film Center, 59th Street East Cinema, and Regency. . . . **POLISH WEDDING:** Angelika Film Center, Beekman, and 84th Street Sixplex. . . . **THE SALTMEN OF TIBET:** Film Forum. . . . **SMOKE SIGNALS:** Angelika Film Center and Gotham Cinema. . . . **THE SPANISH PRISONER** (4/13/98): Lincoln Plaza Cinemas. . . . **TITANIC** (12/15/97): Worldwide Cinemas. . . . **THE TRUMAN SHOW** (6/15/98): First & 62nd Cinemas and Waverly.

REVIVALS, CLASSICS, ETC.

(Titles with a dagger are reviewed above.)

Film Forum 2, W. Houston St. west of Sixth Ave. (727-8110)—A program of films made by, or about, Preston Sturges. July 29-30: "The Great McGinty" (1940), with Brian Donlevy and Akim Tamiroff, and "Christmas in July" (1940), with Dick Powell and Ellen Drew. . . . July 31-Aug. 3: "Sullivan's Travels" (†) and "Hail the Conquering Hero" (†). . . . Aug. 4: "Mad Wednesday" (1946), with Harold Lloyd and Jimmy Conlin, and "Preston Sturges: The Rise and Fall of an American Dreamer" (†).

Museum of Modern Art, Roy and Niuta Titus Theatres, 11 W. 53rd St. (708-9480)—July 30 at 2:30: "Dead of Night" (1945, Basil Dearden, Alberto Cavalcanti, Robert Hamer, and Charles Crichton). . . . July 30 at 6: "The Eel" (1997, Shohei Imamura; in Japanese). . . . July 31 at 2:30 and Aug. 1 at 5: "La Dolce Vita" (1960, Federico Fellini; in Italian). . . . July 31 at 6 and Aug. 2 at 2: "Advise and Consent" (1962, Otto Preminger). . . . July 31 at 8 and Aug. 2 at 5: "Atlantic City" (1980, Louis Malle). . . . Aug. 1 at 2 and Aug. 3 at 6: "Alice in Wonderland" (1948, Dallas Bower and Lou Bunin). . . . Aug. 3 at 2:30 and Aug. 4 at 6: "U-Turn" (1997, Oliver Stone). . . . Aug. 4 at 2:30: "A Midnight Clear" (1992, Keith Gordon).

Walter Reade Theatre, Lincoln Center (875-5600)—July 30 at 6:30: "Men Cry Bullets" (1998, Tamara Hernandez). . . . July 31-Aug. 20: A program of films from the Philippines. . . . Aug. 1-2 at 2: "Hercules in New York" (1970, Arthur Seidelman).

American Museum of the Moving Image, 35th Ave. at 36th St., Astoria (718-784-0077)—A program of films directed or produced by Steven Spielberg. Aug. 1 at 2 and Aug. 2 at 2: "E.T. The Extra-Terrestrial" (†). . . . Aug. 1-2 at 4:30: "Poltergeist" (1982, Tobe Hooper), with JoBeth Williams, Craig T. Nelson, Beatrice Straight, and Zelda Rubinstein.

Florence Gould Hall, 55 E. 59th St. (355-6160)—Aug. 4 at 12:30, 3:30, and 6:30: "Mademoiselle Striptease" (1956, Marc Allégret; in French). . . . Aug. 4 at 9: "Bitter Moon" (1994, Roman Polanski).

Brooklyn Museum of Art, Eastern Parkway (718-638-5000, ext. 230)—A program of Mexican films on which Gabriel Figueroa served as cinematographer. Aug. 1 at 5: "Night of the Iguana" (1964, John Huston), with Richard Burton, Deborah Kerr, Ava Gardner, and Sue Lyon.

The 21st Asian American International Film Festival—Two days (July 31-Aug. 1) of new films from India, the United States, Hong Kong, Japan, China, South Korea, and the Philippines. (Florence Gould Hall, 55 E. 59th St. For information, call 925-6014.)

Bryant Park, Sixth Ave. at 42nd St.—Mondays, starting at dusk: free drive-in-style moviegoing, beginning with coming attractions. The feature on Aug. 3 will be "It Should Happen to You" (1954, George Cukor), with Judy Holliday, Jack Lemmon, and Peter Lawford. (Rain date is the following night.)

A Different Light Bookstore, 151 W. 19th St.—A Sunday-night series of free films (and popcorn). On Aug. 2 at 7, the feature will be "The Fugitive Kind" (1959, Sidney Lumet), with Marlon Brando, Anna Magnani, and Joanne Woodward.

Anthology Film Archives, 32 Second Ave., at 2nd St. (505-5110)—A program of films by Michelangelo Antonioni; in Italian, with English subtitles. July 31 at 8 and 10 and Aug. 1 at 4: "The Lady Without Camelias" (1953). . . . Aug. 1 at 8 and Aug. 2 at 4: "I Vinti" (1952). . . . Aug. 2 at 8: "Il Grido" (1957).

Guggenheim Museum, Fifth Ave. at 89th St. (423-3587)—A program of films featuring the motorcycle. July 29 at 2:30: "If . . ." (1969, Lindsay Anderson). . . . July 29 at 6: "The Beautiful Prisoner" (1983, Alain Robbe-Grillet; in French). . . . July 31 at 2:30: "The Loveless" (1983, Kathryn Bigelow). . . . July 31 at 7:30: "Then Came Bronson" (1969, William A. Graham), the pilot film for the television series.

Museum of Television and Radio, 25 W. 52nd St. (621-6800)—Through July 31: "See How She Runs" (1978, Richard T. Heffron). . . . From Aug. 1: "Queen of the Stardust Ballroom" (1975, Sam O'Steen). . . . ¶ Through Sept. 24: A series of films starring the Monty Pythons.

THEATRE ADDRESSES

•

(For show times, call 777-FILM, except where noted.)

Angelika Film Center, 18 W. Houston St.
Art Greenwich Twin, Greenwich Ave. at 12th St.
Astor Plaza, 44th St. at Broadway.
Beekman, Second Ave. at 66th St.
Chelsea Cinemas, 260 W. 23rd St.
Chelsea West, 333 W. 23rd St.
Cinema I, Third Ave. at 60th St.
Cinema II, Third Ave. at 60th St.
Cinema 3rd Avenue, Third Ave. at 60th St.
Cinema Village, 22 E. 12th St.
Coronet Cinemas, Third Ave. at 59th St.
Criterion Center, Broadway at 44th St.
East 85th Street, First Ave. at 85th St.
Eastside Playhouse, Third Ave. at 55th St.
84th Street Sixplex, Broadway at 84th St.
86th Street East Twin, Third Ave. at 86th St.
Embassy 1, 2, and 3, Seventh Ave. at 47th St.
59th Street East Cinema, 239 E. 59th St.
Film Forum, W. Houston St. west of Sixth Ave. (727-8110).
First & 62nd Cinemas, 400 E. 62nd St.
Gotham Cinema, Third Ave. at 58th St.
Guild, 33 W. 50th St.
Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, Broadway at 63rd St.
Lincoln Square, Broadway at 68th St.
Metro Cinema 1 and 2, Broadway at 99th St.
Murray Hill Cinemas, 160 E. 34th St.
New York Twin, Second Ave. at 67th St.
19th Street East 6, Broadway at 19th St.
Olympia I and II, Broadway at 107th St.
Orpheum VII, Third Ave. at 86th St.
Paris, 4 W. 58th St. (688-3800).
Park & 86th Street Cinemas, 125 E. 86th St.
Quad Cinema, 34 W. 13th St.
Regency, Broadway at 67th St.
The Screening Room, 54 Varick St. (334-2100).
62nd & Broadway, 62 W. 62nd St.
64th and 2nd, Second Ave. at 64th St.
72nd Street East, Third Ave. at 71st St.
State, Broadway at 45th St.
Sutton 1 and 2, Third Ave. at 57th St.
34th Street Showplace, 238 E. 34th St.
Village East Cinemas, Second Ave. at 12th St.
Village Theatre VII, Third Ave. at 11th St.
Waverly 1 and 2, Sixth Ave. at 3rd St.
Worldwide Cinemas, 50th St. between Eighth and Ninth Aves.
Ziegfeld, 141 W. 54th St.

DON DOE

The Yanks are coming

For 27 years, if drama was your fancy, you could turn to *Mobil Masterpiece Theatre* to feast on great British productions. Now, thanks to an inspired partnership, you and millions of other television viewers will be able to savor outstanding American drama as well.

Mobil, the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB), PBS, WGBH Boston and two esteemed U.S. producers are collaborating to bring quality American drama to public television. The outlet for this creative partnership will be called *Mobil Masterpiece Theatre's American Collection.*

The new addition brings together the talents of Rebecca Eaton, WGBH executive producer of *Mobil Masterpiece Theatre,* and Marian Rees, whose productions have aired on *Hallmark Hall of Fame*. "The films," Rees noted, "will be based on profoundly American stories that recognize not only our diversity, but also the common threads and experiences that bind us together." Ms. Eaton pointed out that, "our goal is to present superb American drama in the finest *Mobil Masterpiece Theatre* tradition."

And what constitutes American drama? It tells stories in a deeply American way of who we were, who we are and who we are becoming.

Altogether, nine films will be aired over three seasons. Among the first American dramas viewers will see are Langston Hughes' short story *Cora Unashamed*; Willa Cather's partially autobiographical novel, *Song of the Lark*; and Henry James' *The American*.

And to awaken a new audience to these dramas, the partnership will undertake a broad educational outreach effort, in concert with the National Council of Teachers of English, to bring *Mobil Masterpiece Theatre's American Collection* to high schools. Classroom materials will be provided to support the programs and an ambitious World Wide Web site will bring English teachers from all across America to meet the challenge of teaching the novel in the classrooms of today and tomorrow.

Mobil Masterpiece Theatre: 27 years of critically acclaimed television, with seven Peabody and 29 Emmy awards. As the sponsor of television's longest-running dramatic series, we're pleased that viewer ranks have been growing despite the proliferation of alternative programming. *Mobil Masterpiece Theatre* is the cornerstone of our commitment to the community and to public television. Mobil's support of programs like these is our way of encouraging and celebrating human creativity. The opportunity to work with others to enrich television programming with great American drama is too compelling to ignore.

Look for *Mobil Masterpiece Theatre's American Collection*. The first programs will be aired during the 1999–2000 television season. For a foretaste of what's to come, sample a television tradition. Tune in to *Mobil Masterpiece Theatre* on Sunday evenings, 9 p.m., on PBS.

Mobil® The energy
to make a difference™

http://www.mobil.com

©1998 Mobil Corporation

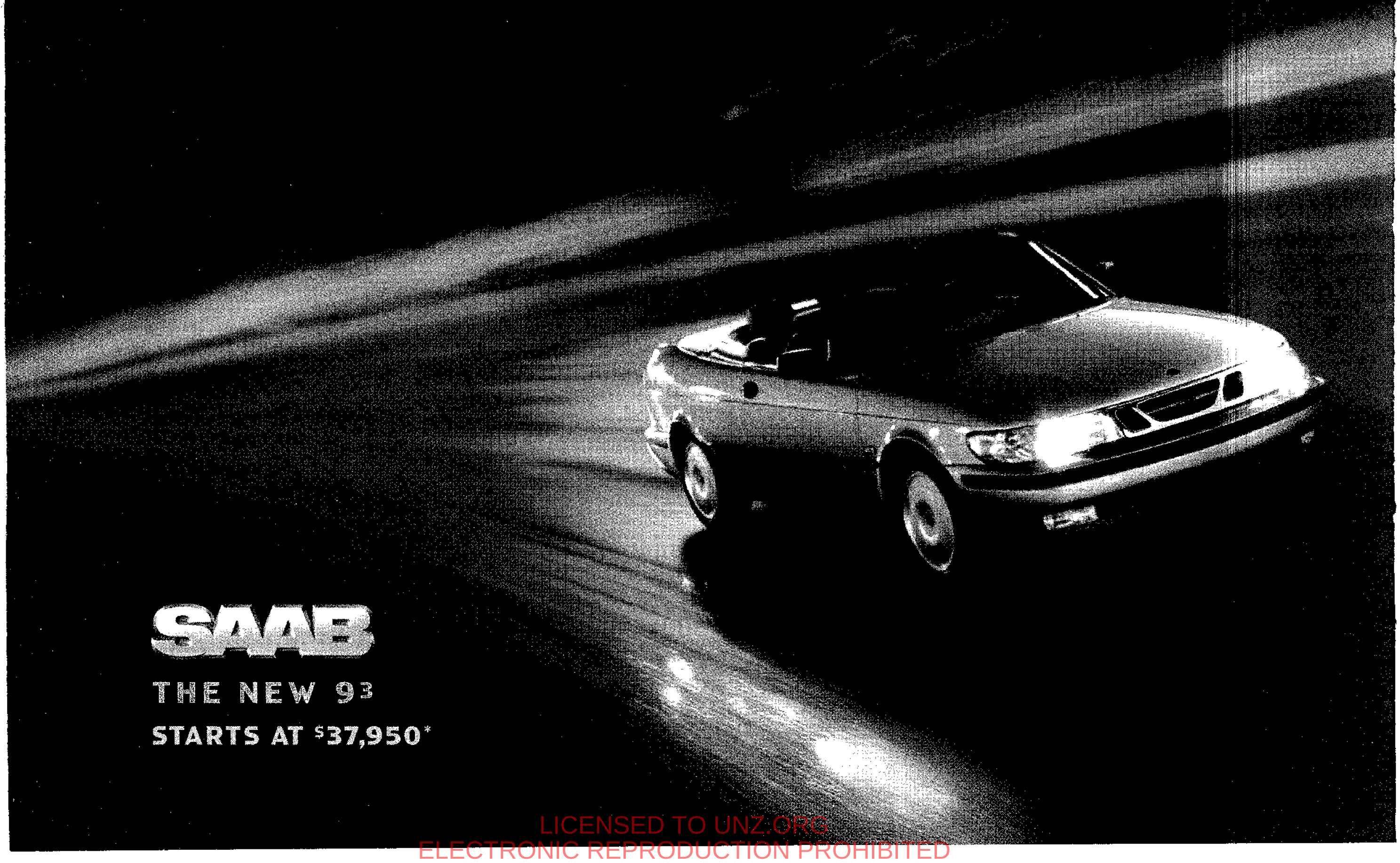
1 800 SAAB USA www.saabusa.com

*MSRP does not include $550 destination charge. Taxes, insurance,
title, registration fees and optional equipment extra. © 1998 SAAB CARS USA, INC.

93

WEAVE YOUR WAY IN AND OUT OF RAINDROPS.

You're driving down the road in a new Saab 9-3 Convertible. When suddenly, from out of nowhere, a raindrop. You consider raising the top. But why? You're in a turbo convertible. With a rigid chassis and the center of gravity positioned near your hips. You feel every twist and turn as you maneuver through the storm. See your Saab dealer for a test drive. Rain or shine.



SAAB

THE NEW 93

STARTS AT $37,950*

THE
NEW YORKER

THE TALK OF THE TOWN

INT. OFFICE—DAY. *A departing* EDITOR *is being toasted by her staff.* FADE TO BROWN.

It was very, very noisy around here last week, and then it got very, very quiet. The noisy part was Tuesday morning, when an enormous steel elevator tower attached to an almost-completed new skyscraper at the northeast corner of Broadway and Forty-second Street suddenly and terrifyingly collapsed, damaging several neighboring buildings, including a residential hotel, one of whose tenants was killed. The quiet part began immediately thereafter, when the city put eight square blocks between Times Square and Fifth Avenue under what amounted to martial law, barricading the streets and establishing checkpoints through which pedestrians might or might not be permitted to pass, depending on whether they could show they had some good reason to be there. The skyscraper in question is the new Condé Nast building, which sometime next year will become *The New Yorker's* new home, and the area sealed off from the rest of Manhattan includes our present offices. The eerie silence and isolation that have been imposed in midtown have been particularly conducive to introspection. So this week we're introspecting. We're thinking about our editrix emerita. Indulge us.

•

Can I play historian for a minute here? Because we historians like to divide things into "periods." *The New Yorker* has now had three of them—periods, I mean, not historians.

First there was the early period, when mists shrouded the emerald glades and conical-capped wizards roamed the mystic shires. Also, gentlemen in top hats and showgirls in fur wraps leaned woozily on lampposts, the Third Avenue El rumbled, and sprawling newsstands carried not only the *Times*, the *News*, and the *Post* but also the *Mirror*, the *Herald*, the *Tribune*, the *World*, the *Sun*, the *Evening Graphic*, and, beginning in 1925, a thin comic weekly called *The New Yorker*. Harold Ross was the King Arthur of the fledgling enterprise, and at its Round Table, trucked from Camelot to the Algonquin, sat Alexander Woollcott and Wolcott Gibbs, James Thurber and E. B. White, Dorothy Parker and Peter Arno. Wit ruled. Gaiety gambolled. The Depression came, but Ross's paper survived and even began to prosper.

Then there was the middle period. Double-decker buses, Checker cabs, soldiers on leave in the cafés, Willie Mays at the Polo Grounds, Charlie Parker at Minton's. War made the comic weekly serious, and the postwar boom made it fat. So profitable was it that it became like the medieval church, whose vast landholdings supported cloisters full of contemplatives, meditating upon higher truths and painstakingly illuminating metaphysical manuscripts. The abbot was William Shawn—that's Mr. Shawn to you, pal, and to me. Small of stature, round of face, bald of head, soft of voice, iron of will, he peopled his rich monastery with the finest scribes—Updike and Salinger, Pauline Kael and Rachel Carson, and A. J. Liebling and Edmund Wilson—and summoned the faithful to oppose unjust war, reject racism, and protect the natural environment. His apostolic if unanointed successor, Robert Gottlieb, did much the same, with an antic touch. But outside the abbey walls the church lands began to fall fallow, and rival sects plundered the crops that had given sustenance.

Then came the third period, the Tina Brown period, which began just six years ago. The venerable institution was drifting inexorably toward dotage. The times demanded revolution, nothing less. The new leader, La Pasionaria in Manolo Blahnik heels, was equal to the task. Didn't Chairman Mao once say that a revolution is not a dinner party? Well, this one was, with dancing till dawn. Tina brought verve and daring to what she did, and it showed on the page. The machinery retooled to keep up. (On the run, the fact-checking department doubled in size.) She was a woman of principle, not least the pleasure principle, which she invoked on behalf of the eye as well as the mind. The magazine opened up to the senses. The imprint she left was as strong as that of her predecessors; but unlike Ross she was not starting with a blank slate, and unlike Shawn she didn't have the cushion of effortless opulence and the luxury of decades in which to nudge change gradually along. Everything was

DOG BY JAMES THURBER FROM THE NEW YORKER MARCH 15, 1941; ADDITIONAL ILLUSTRATIONS BY TOM BACHTELL

telescoped. She had to move fast. She was decisive. She was also glamorous (so much so that few paused to note that she was a feminist milestone, the first woman to edit an important American general-interest magazine). Also, she liked glitz—liked it enough to blind her critics and even some of her admirers to the fact that what she was actually doing went against the tides of a popular culture increasingly unfriendly to the written word. And what was she doing? She was pumping energy and life into a magazine devoted to publishing aesthetically and intellectually demanding writing. Please notice: she saved *The New Yorker.*

Now comes the fourth period—and that, as every N.B.A. fan knows, is the one that decides the game.

—Hendrik Hertzberg

•

One day I mentioned to Tina Brown that Tom Stoppard's new work, "The Invention of Love," had opened to good reviews in London. The subject of the play is A. E. Housman, and I suggested that, should the production move to New York, I might write something about him. Tina considered for a moment, and then asked, "Is Housman hot?"

Now, there was plenty in this question that could provide ammunition to Tina's foes, who never miss an opportunity to shoot, although they mostly miss. Of the many adjectives that one could plausibly apply to that great scholar and poet, "hot" is not exactly the first that springs to mind. "Cold" would be more apposite, as would "secretive," "desiccated," "donnish," "pedantic," and "unhappy." In short, he was a particular hero of mine, and, try as I might, it would not be easy to reconfigure the author of "A Shropshire Lad" and connoisseur of Propertius as an early-model Marky Mark.

But then I thought back to the play itself, from which Housman does indeed emerge as a man inflamed by the blaze of a lost love; and then I thought forward to a Broadway opening, and to the interviews and features that inevitably would be spun from it. If Stoppard had another hit, Barnes & Noble would soon be stocking up on Propertius, and Martha Stewart would explain, in the House & Home section of the *Times*, how to hang your cherries with snow. And if we could get there first . . .

There were innumerable occasions on which Tina was right, and obviously right; but I had a fondness for those times when she was right while seeming to be wrong, or when she went via wrongness to get to the right stuff. Critics claimed to discern superfluous gloss, but what she did was to apply the invigorating rhetoric of gloss to the supposedly unglamorous, and thereby encourage readers to try what they might otherwise disdain; only thus can I account for her kindly tolerance of my grimmer tastes. (Once, after I had followed an Edward Lear piece with a T. S. Eliot piece, we decided that I should be appointed official S.L.F. correspondent. It stood for Sad Lonely Fucks.) "The Invention of Love" has yet to arrive in New York, but Tina was right: Housman is hot. Or, if he isn't hot right now, he will be by the time he gets here. And it was Tina's question that began to warm him up. —Anthony Lane

•

Before Tina Brown came to *The New Yorker*, in 1992, there was no such thing as an editorial meeting. Since the editor-in-chief made all the substantive decisions regarding nonfiction, or "fact," pieces, there was no need for the fact editors to get together with him as a group. All that changed in 1992: fact editors now had to make assignments, accept and reject pieces, get involved in the planning of special issues, lobby for writers, explain why a writer had missed a deadline, haggle over word counts. Overnight, our duck pond had been turned into a speed-skating track.

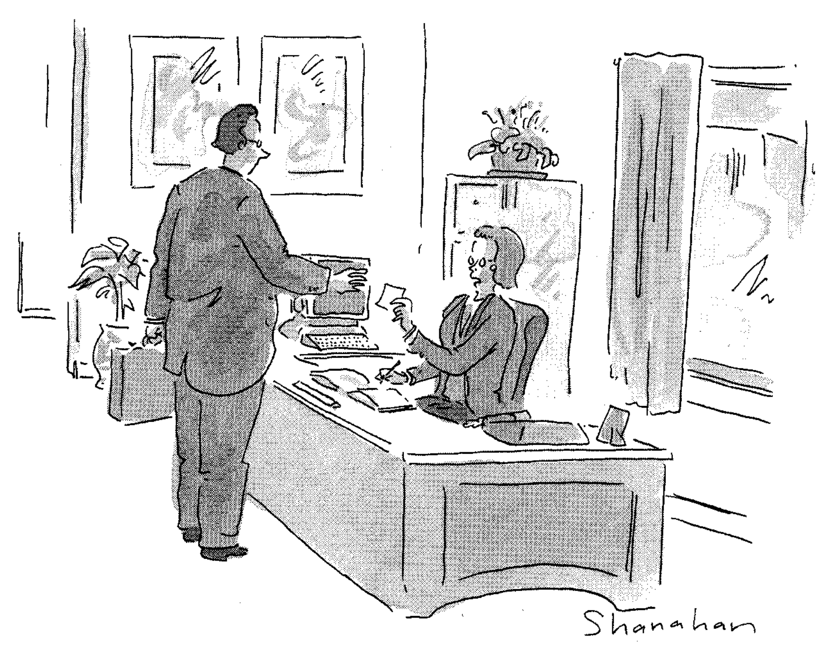
In this new scenario, I was a little like the Hollywood starlet who was so dumb that she slept with the screenwriter: I didn't get it. Alone among the half-dozen or so fact editors, I liked the meetings, but I liked them for their own sake. To me, a good meeting was one at which everyone laughed a lot or I found out what X really thought of Y. When it came to the things that I was supposed to do before and after meetings—my job, that is—it was clear that this new role was an ill-fitting suit.

In exasperated response to this situation, Tina did something that was completely uncalled for: she made me a writer. In the four and a half years of hindsight that have accrued since she dreamed up this experiment, the idea has not come to seem obvious or inevitable; I'm no longer exactly surprised that I'm a writer, but I'm still surprised that I became one in the first place. In one strategic move, Tina had both solved a problem and created an opportunity. At the time, I had the sickening feeling that I had been seen through, but also the feeling (which was, in truth, hardly less sickening) that I had been seen.

Tina had my number, all right, but our working relationship was not based on the fraught, doomed mentor-protégée model; it was freer than that, its rewards and its difficulties more genuine. She had a way of reaching into my head and sorting through the ragbag of thoughts and aimless preoccupations, and then coming up with an idea for a piece. Over the years, I've learned that if Tina has an idea for me that horrifies me, that makes me go farther than I'm comfortable going, it's probably a good one. —Nancy Franklin

•

"Go away!" she told me, and I did. So for three years we communicated almost exclusively by fax. At three-thirty or four in the morning in my Paris apartment, I would hear the click and whirr of the fax machine, and there Tina, or T., as her fax identity signed itself, would appear. (Her signing herself T. was eerily reminiscent of M., James Bond's recently feminized boss.) A missive was on its way: praise, displeasure, complaint, curiosity, a joke, scribbled or typed. One of my favorite Paris faxes is one in which she suggested that I move to London for six months, switching places with Anthony Lane. (The implication, I'm sure unin-



"Your daughter called—you promised to play phone tag with her today."

tentional, was that we could slip right in with each other's partner and child.)

What always struck me was how much Tina's struggles, conveyed by fax, resembled those of the *New Yorker* editors who preceded her. Like Harold Ross, she was always convinced that there was a "Jesus" just around the corner who could produce a smoothly humming editorial machine. Like William Shawn, she came to be a confessor figure, privy to many secrets and affairs. Like Robert Gottlieb, she discovered finally that her chief contribution to the magazine was the writers she helped—and sometimes forced—to grow.

Tina approached the magazine as a challenge, and by the end it had become for her a crusade. Although her most visible legacy is the remade magazine, I suspect that her permanent legacy will lie elsewhere. She knew that *The New Yorker* would always be a magazine of words, and that the glamour of words will always be ideas. The old *New Yorker*, where many of us were raised, had always been justifiably suspicious of idea-driven pieces, on the ground that the facts should speak for themselves. (The perfect critical piece might be one in which the description was so good that no opinion was registered.) Tina loves ideas—odd ideas, disreputable ideas, above all original ideas—and considered them the life of the magazine. The memorable argumentative pieces she published (on the "tipping point," and on the failures of victim art, for example) were more idea-driven, sometimes even more polemical, than almost any that had appeared in her predecessors' magazines. Of course, this was partly a result of Tina's eternal love of controversy, but it was mostly to do with a real appetite to see her writers hanging out over the edge, saying the unsayable. She could spot a phony or politically inspired response a mile—or eighteen hundred miles—away, and she loved courage. The magazine will remain smarter and braver—more open to argument, and incomparably less timid—for her presence here.

—ADAM GOPNIK

•

I NEARLY choked on my tea and crumpets the other day upon hearing a BBC announcer use the word "chutzpah" as if it were an approved item of the Queen's English, as in "it looks like a sticky wicket, but the England Team is certainly not short of chutzpah." Of course, Yiddish pronunciation has some way to go at the BBC (the magic word came out sounding like "whose-pa"), but the announcer was doing his best to prove that British chutzpah isn't a contradiction in terms.

But then Tina Brown, journalism's empress of chutzpah, has already proved that these past six years in every issue of *The New Yorker*. There was, for a start, her scandalous notion that argument and entertainment need not be incompatible. Things only got more shocking with the working principles that style and substance might cohabit; that solemnity was not invariably a sign of seriousness; and, most chutzpahdik of all, that text and image might actually strengthen, rather than weaken, each other's power. Her fearlessness also extended to asking people like me to take on challenges at which we normally would have quailed, had it not been for Tina's reckless conviction that we could turn ourselves into the literary equivalent of the Little Engine That Could and I-think-I-can ourselves over the mountain in time for Friday's deadline.

There was not much chugging along about writing for Tina's *New Yorker*, though; it was more like a wild and wonderful ride. For the creative energy flowing through the offices on West Forty-third Street these past years seems to me to have been a high-octane restlessness, delivering an exhilarating run of ideas, projects, jokes, acts of mischief, and real philosophical insights. With Tina at the wheel, the beautiful old magazine suddenly picked up speed and reared off down the avenue, committing every moving violation in the book.

Those of us along for the ride were happy writers. We were given an outrageous amount of freedom to work on assignments that excited us, at a length that could do justice to what we had to say, and in whatever way we chose, always provided we lived up to Tina's three unwritten commandments: "Never be dull," "Never be obscure," "Never be patronizing." And of all the untruths told about her editorship none seems to me to be more misguided than the notion that she was a distant, hands-off editor, more concerned with surface impressions than with the copy itself. Early on in my stint as art critic, I realized that Tina read every line of a piece and that her eye for the shape and color of an essay was exacting. She took a piece of mine on a subject I thought I knew something about (that, of course, was the problem), and which had been disastrously crumpled by overcomplication, picked it up, and shook it inside out until it was clean and crisp and as welcoming as a freshly laundered sheet.

—SIMON SCHAMA

The Strap™
For the Luggage that calls your name
THE- STRAP is 1-1/4" wide, 66" long "**PERSONALIZED LUGGAGE BELT**", made of a strong, high quality elasticized fabric. **YOUR NAME** is repeatedly woven along the length and is adjustable to tighten around your suitcase, making it easy and fast **to identify your luggage**. For added protection each strap has a locking buckle.
For...
- *luggage • golf bag*
- *computer case*
- *stroller*
- *personal gear*
$12.95
plus shipping
Tax NY Res Only
www.The-Strap.com
Tel 1-888-30-STRAP
Fax:1-888-39-STRAP
Signature Plus, Ltd.
146-05 Union Tpke · Flushing, NY 11367

SMALL SPACE =
BIG BUSINESS
Reach 3.5 million NEW YORKER readers who spent almost 1.7 billion dollars* on mail-order purchases in the past year.
•
Write your own success story by advertising in THE NEW YORKER.
•
For more information on SMALL SPACE ADS, please call 212.536.5600.
* SOURCE: FALL 1997 SIMMONS

TURKEY
Discover the best—in style. Hike to remote ruins, balloon over Cappadocia, sail the Turquoise Coast. Luxuriate at Four Seasons Hotel Istanbul.
SMALL GROUPS. FREE VIDEO AND BROCHURE.
INCA *(Inca Floats, Inc.)*
1311-YT 63rd Street, Emeryville, CA 94608
510-420-1550 incafloats@aol.com

COCKTAIL PIANO
Now in its 7th year with 7 fabulous albums. Vol. 1 features 20 all-time favorites like **As Time Goes By, These Foolish Things,** and **Misty.** A perfect background for dining, parties, and reminiscing, this soft, elegant piano is also a great stress reducer. CDs $17.95, Tapes $11.95 incl. ship. To order Vol. 1 **call Toll Free (888) 521-9330.** VISA & MC.
JIM HASKINS, 432 Iliaina St., Kailua, HI 96734 • www.cocktailpiano.com

Rapid, Safe Weight Loss
Medically Supervised
Since 1939 • Durham, NC
1-888-RICEDIET
www.ricediet.com

Perfect Shoes for Imperfect Feet
Whether your feet are taking you around the world, the town, or just around the house
$32(&S/H) Women's full & ½ sizes
1-800-Shoes-2-Go
cdb/boston 14 N Park, Watertown MA 02472

ANNALS OF BROADCASTING

THE PEOPLE'S NETWORK

War was good to CNN. It was peacetime that brought calamity.

BY PETER J. BOYER

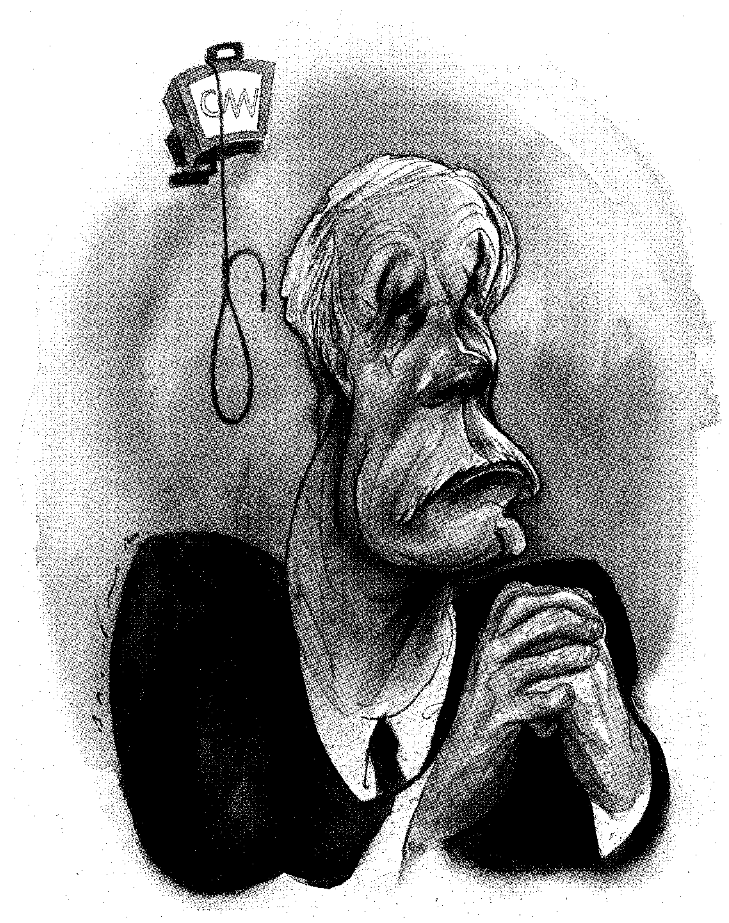
ALMOST immediately after the Cable News Network retracted a report that the American military had used lethal nerve gas on a mission, Operation Tailwind, that targeted United States defectors in Laos during the Vietnam War, the institution plunged into a sort of ritual expiation—a process of resignations and firings, of apologies and public self-examination—that culminated in California two weeks ago when CNN's founder, Ted Turner, delivered what one spectator called "the mother of all mea culpas" to an assembly of television critics. Turner sold CNN's parent company, TBS, Inc., to Time Warner in 1996, for seven and a half billion dollars, and is now the vice-chairman of Time Warner, but he checks in at the network almost every day and still calls it "my baby." The disputed report, "Valley of Death," was narrated by Peter Arnett and broadcast on June 7th, as the kickoff of a series called "NewsStand: CNN & *Time*." The program was supposed to be a synergistic collaboration with the magazine, but although *Time* published a related article, signed by Arnett and the segment's producer, April Oliver, the story was really a CNN project. According to a report by Floyd Abrams, the outside counsel whom CNN asked to evaluate the show after it aired, and CNN's own chief lawyer, "A decision was made by CNN to broadcast accusations of the gravest sort without sufficient justification and in the face of substantial persuasive information to the contrary."

"I couldn't hurt any more if I was bleeding," Turner told his California audience, saying that he longed for a lash so that he might bloody himself then and there. He felt so bad, he said, that if "committing mass suicide" would help he would consider it. He went on to say that his humiliation was so complete, his mortification so deeply felt, that no other sorrow he'd known in his fifty-nine years—the suicide of his father, the breakup of his first two marriages, the 1996 World Series defeat of the Braves by the Yankees—compared with what he felt now. What had happened at CNN was, indeed, "probably *the* greatest catastrophe of my life."

"Valley of Death" was viewed by some inside CNN as emblematic of a news organization that had lost its way. A year ago, CNN hired the prominent news showman Rick Kaplan from ABC to run the flagship news channel, in the hope of acquiring some of the stylishness and polish of the big broadcast networks. Kaplan lured some former ABC colleagues to CNN—most notably, the political commentator Jeff Greenfield—and he tinkered with personnel, but the overriding task in his first year of trying to move CNN "to the next level," as he put it, was the creation of new prime-time programs that were meant to hook and hold viewers when there was no big breaking news in the world. Naturally, some people at CNN argued that the old, unglamorous, straight-ahead style had been the source of CNN's greatest asset—a ranking as viewers' most trusted source of television news—and after "Valley of Death" they were quick to excoriate Kaplan. So far, Kaplan has enjoyed the crucial support of Turner and of Gerald Levin, the Time Warner chairman. Turner, though, during his outpouring in California, seemed to express doubts about the new CNN culture. After remarking on the intense pressure for profits in an increasingly competitive media marketplace dominated by huge corporations, he said, "We'd hired a lot of new people, particularly from ABC, and went into the newsmagazine business," and he added, almost wistfully, "We had a much more collegial, smaller network, and nothing like this ever happened before."

RIVAL journalists at the big broadcast networks smile at the idea of Ted Turner's getting nostalgic over a lost CNN culture, and some might suggest that CNN had no culture to be nostalgic for. Actually, what CNN had was a counterculture—an identity that was defined largely by what it was not. The élite television news establishment—ABC, CBS, and NBC—had its headquarters in sleek Manhattan buildings; CNN for its first seven years was based in a renovated former country club in Atlanta. The network broadcasters reached virtually every American home and commanded huge audiences. When Turner launched CNN, in 1980, it couldn't be seen by most Americans even if they were looking for it, and they mostly weren't. The networks had annual budgets of well over a hundred million dollars, which they spent on a relatively small news hole—basically, their morning and evening news broadcasts and magazine shows like "60 Minutes." CNN began with a total news budget of twenty-five million dollars, and had a twenty-four-hour news hole to fill. The networks were fighting over who would pay Dan Rather millions of dollars to anchor a twenty-two-minute nightly newscast. CNN religiously shunned the star system—"The *news* is the star"—and paid its on-air broadcasters less than many local TV stations paid theirs.

CNN even looked different from the news networks—like a slightly farcical Ed Wood version of TV news. While the networks recruited correspondents and anchors who looked like Hollywood handsomes, some of the on-air people at CNN had, as the old broadcasting joke goes, great faces for radio. ("We looked like the bar scene from 'Star Wars,'" says Art Harris, a bald correspondent who has been at CNN since 1990.) CNN's Pentagon correspondent had a beard, and was named Wolf. It was a quirky place, partly by circumstance, partly because it reflected the peculiarities of the proprietor. Turner had notions about the people who worked for him (no smokers) and about news terminology (no use of the word "foreign").



The nerve-gas fiasco was so humiliating for Turner that he felt obligated to offer "the mother of all mea culpas" at an industry gathering.

STEVE BRODNER

But the constraints and the lack of glamour also worked to CNN's advantage, shaping its aspiration to become something like a video wire service, producing a journalism that was straight, quick, and balanced. If the content lacked analytical depth, there was plenty of breadth, with correspondents and crews filling the cable signal with stories, especially from Washington, that wouldn't make the big networks' small evening news hole. As Turner expanded his network in the eighties, opening bureaus and adding staff, CNN mastered the technology and the technique of providing live coverage of news events; if its all-news approach was derided as point-and-shoot journalism, it was gaining a distinct competitive advantage in the field. And, as it turned out, an important corollary benefit of simply recording events, rather than interpreting them, was an added measure of viewer trust.

In 1990, Turner hired Tom Johnson, a former publisher of the Los Angeles *Times* and a fully credentialled member of the media establishment, to run the growing network. A courtly Georgian with a graduate degree from Harvard Business School, Johnson was a Bill Moyers protégé and a friend of Walter Cronkite's. When he accepted Turner's job offer, he was staying with Lady Bird Johnson on Martha's Vineyard. Within weeks, he was a regular at the Chick-fil-A in the atrium of the CNN Center, in downtown Atlanta. He didn't have a car with a driver, or a private dining room, or a pension plan, but he relished running CNN. "I've always thought of CNN as the people's network," he says. "I love the lean-and-mean news machine. To see this maverick band of people that Ted had assembled, some of whom had been alcoholics, some of whom had been *fired* by other networks, some of whom were young people coming up . . . I love that." Johnson is as responsible as anyone for two aspects of the CNN culture that make it unique: its collegiality and an almost compulsive egalitarianism. Johnson welcomes suggestions from even the lowest-paid employee, and he insists that his colleagues do the same. CNN is a place where a sound technician can openly question the cost of an anchor's hotel expenses and still have a job the next day.

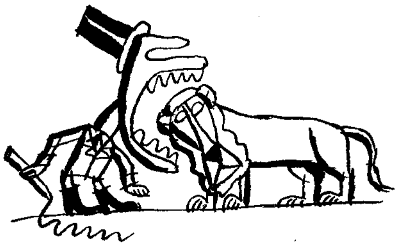
As it happened, Johnson arrived on the eve of the Gulf War, of which CNN subsequently emerged as the true victor. When the government warned American correspondents to get out of Baghdad, CNN's Peter Arnett, John Holliman, and Bernard Shaw stayed behind. More significantly, they had a reason to stay: CNN, unlike the networks (who also still had some people on the scene), had set up a dedicated transmission line in advance, giving it a link even when the Iraq phone lines and power went down. It was an astonishing coup—the best scoop imaginable. Suddenly, CNN had the sort of success that the institution had willed itself not to covet—ratings that occasionally beat even those of the broadcast networks. CNN's motley population of correspondents became household names, and CNN established itself as a kind of party line for world leaders. George Bush said that he learned more from watching CNN than from listening to the C.I.A.

But the war ended, and viewers returned to their soap operas and their sports. Peace and prosperity are not good for CNN. "When there is a quiet news environment, our audience shrinks to well below one per cent of the television households," Johnson says. Last year, ratings spiked predictably during the coverage of Princess Diana's death, but they soon flattened again. There was also competition from two new all-news cable networks, MSNBC and the Fox News Channel. Fox had a gimmick—it would play against the perceived orthodoxies of the media—and MSNBC had high-tech flash, hip young newsreaders, and familiar faces from NBC. (When the Capitol Hill shootings occurred last week, MSNBC was quickly on the air with Tom Brokaw.) Even before the merger with Time Warner, Turner and Johnson were going shopping for someone who could reinvent CNN.

IT turns out that ratings success in peacetime is a pretty simple matter, once the secret is known, and the secret is something called "appointment programming"—a concept that is accorded the faith of received truth among people at CNN just now. Appointment programming is the term for a show that viewers watch regularly. (In entertainment television, of course, such a show is known as a hit.) The problem for CNN is that breaking news doesn't keep appointments—in fact, may not show up for months at a time. CNN had one big show in prime time, "Larry King Live"—a ratings smash by CNN standards—and the company's mission is to create several more. When Johnson was asked if that was a task that could have been undertaken by someone inside CNN, he was blunt: "It was not. Not that job." Instead, Johnson went searching for such a programming wonder in the very places that for seventeen years CNN had steadfastly avoided emulating—the news divisions of ABC, NBC, and CBS. "Rick Kaplan's name kept coming up, many different times, from a variety of people," he says.

Kaplan, an imposing man of six feet seven, had been a star at ABC, working as executive producer of "Nightline," "World News Tonight with Peter Jennings," "World News This Morning," and "PrimeTime Live"; before that, he had been a producer for Walter Cronkite at CBS News. Johnson, in the course of his inquiries, was undoubtedly treated to a sampling of Rick Kaplan stories, of which there is a full and colorful anthology. The tale that is most often repeated involves the 1989 Bay Area earthquake, which struck just a couple of hours before "PrimeTime Live," then in its infancy, went on the air. An ABC News team was assembled on the spot, and crashed an instant report in time for the broadcast. There were a few glitches, understandably, but over all it was an impressive performance, and afterward the "PrimeTime" team gathered in a producer's office and awaited the customary call of congratulations from the boss, Kaplan. When the call came, the senior producer, David Doss, went on the line. As one former staff person tells the story, Kaplan wanted to be put on a speaker phone, but, on being told that the office had no such equipment, he instructed Doss to repeat his message in its entirety to the staff. Doss listened, then turned to the room and said, " 'I hate you all.... You are the worst producers on the face of the earth.' " Finally, Kaplan told Doss himself (who is now Tom Brokaw's executive producer at NBC), "I wish you were dead." (Kaplan later apologized.)

"I was warned that Rick could be explosive," Johnson acknowledges. "One description is 'dynamic,' but I guess the other description is 'explosive.' " Johnson also knew that Kaplan had been involved in a number of controversies at ABC, and he was an unabashed F.O.B., having been close to the President since Clinton's days as Arkansas's Attorney General: in the 1992 campaign, Kaplan offered Clinton some advice on how to handle the Gennifer Flowers scandal, and he has spent the night in the Lincoln Bedroom.



Nevertheless, Johnson was impressed by Kaplan's record, and by the fact that even his detractors conceded his brilliance—by which they meant his television brilliance. While producing "Nightline," Kaplan had taken the show to South Africa for a week of broadcasts featuring dialogues on apartheid, and he helped to create the "town hall" concept that became a television staple in the nineteen-nineties. Johnson says, "I was told by those who had worked with Rick—people like Jeff Greenfield—that he is one of the most creative, imaginative forces in television news today. It just seemed to me that his leadership would be very, very good for us."

THE mere fact that Johnson was importing an outsider to "fix" CNN was cause for a certain unease in a place that was already jumpy. Everyone at CNN knew that ratings were down, and keenly felt the pressures of performing in the face of new competition and under the glare of new corporate ownership. Outside efficiency experts had recommended cost-cutting measures, and two hundred and ten positions had already been eliminated through attrition.

Kaplan, for his part, began by undertaking a couple of quick, and much needed, programming repairs. There had been twenty-four anchors on the air at CNN—a parade so long that it was difficult for viewers to connect with any of the faces. Kaplan fired some of the anchors and reassigned others. He also addressed one of the most amateurish quirks of CNN's programming: its recycling of the same news footage over and over again, so that viewers would often awaken in the morning to the same pictures they'd seen before going to bed the night before. Kaplan pushed producers to find fresh footage for the morning news broadcast, and obtained noticeable results.

Kaplan, with his news-as-theatre sensibility, ordered up a series of instant specials, including two that employed his trademark town-hall technique, which puts an anchor in a room full of experts and ordinary citizens who all pipe up about the subject of the day. Kaplan also commissioned a series of news specials, on subjects ranging from China to the Democratic fund-raising scandal and the press frenzy over Monica Lewinsky, and the ratings have been satisfying. "Here's what Rick is—he's an impresario," says Jeff Greenfield, who in his first week on the job was deployed by Kaplan for the Lewinsky special. "His great strength is that he works almost by flashes of insight and with tremendous energy. That town meeting we did six days after I got there was something he came up with on Monday, and we were on the air by Wednesday. That's what you need at a place like CNN. Two hours, live, and it worked. But the key was that we did it as the story was breaking, in the first flush. That's what Rick Kaplan brings to the table."

Kaplan began to assemble a "Kaplan team" at CNN. Inevitably, a division developed between those who were part of the Kaplan team and those who were not—a division that roughly paralleled the two sides of the debate over whether or not CNN should veer from its live-event, news-coverage orientation. People working on the creation of the new "appointment" series, "NewsStand"—actually, three series, linked to the Time Warner magazines *Time*, *Fortune*, and *Entertainment Weekly*—were frustrated by what seemed institutional indifference to, or lack of savvy about, the requirements of a high-gloss, content-rich program. Even the studio microphones were better suited to doing live news feeds. People outside that circle, though, saw the Kaplan team as élitist and dismissive, and some resented the resources and the attention that Kaplan sought to devote to "NewsStand."

Kaplan's personal style only deepened the fissure. A climate in which everyone with something to say expects to be heard does not lend itself to the administration of an executive not known for a consensus approach, and the famous Kaplan dynamism was coming across as abuse. He told one CNN producer who didn't seem to grasp the Kaplan vision, "You'll either learn to think outside the box or you'll go home in one." He casually called another person "shit-for-brains." On one occasion, after a camera turned to the wrong co-anchor at the end of a glitch-filled report, he told an overworked producer named Sue Bunda, "You are a fucking idiot."

Johnson knew that at ABC Kaplan had managed to generate a remarkable degree of loyalty among his staff, who allowed their boss his personality failings as payment for his broadcasting creativity and the success he brought to the network. That was what Johnson hoped for at CNN, and that was partly why the début of Kaplan's grand creation at CNN, "NewsStand," with the startling "Valley of Death" segment, was so eagerly awaited: there is no better balm than success.

"Dad, can I borrow your password tonight?"

• •

In the post-mortem report on the segment, Abrams and CNN's legal department concluded that the producers had allowed their honest belief in the truth of the report to get the best of their judgment; that they had presented sources as confirming the story when the sources were actually ambiguous or speaking in hypothetical terms; that they had underplayed evidence contradicting their thesis; and that they had wrongly ignored inconsistencies between the accounts of Tailwind that one of their key sources, Lieutenant Robert Van Buskirk, gave on the air and in a book he had written earlier. (Two of the segment's producers, Jack Smith and April Oliver, who were fired, still stand by the story.)

Two weeks after CNN retracted the story, Tom Johnson was still seething. In a recent conversation, he spontaneously tore into the broadcast before I could even bring it up. "I tell you, it's almost incomprehensible that a team of experienced journalists could work for eight and a half months, could have conducted more than two hundred interviews, make many revisions of the script, and produce such a badly flawed piece of work," he said. "This whole thing is still mind-boggling. I've always been deeply concerned about our making a big mistake in live television. There is no safety net for live. I never expected that we'd make such a fiasco out of an investigative project, with so much time, so much talent, and so many warning signals along the way that obviously didn't reach the decision-makers who could have stopped it."

Actually, Johnson is one of the decision-makers at CNN who could have stopped the report, and the fact that he didn't is another source of his abiding anger. On Tuesday, June 2nd, five days before the show was scheduled to air, Johnson asked to read a script for "Valley of Death."According to a CNN executive familiar with the events, Johnson was more than a little dismayed by allegations in the report. He summoned members of the "NewsStand" team to a meeting and handed them back the script, with several questions written on it, and he told his staff people that he wanted CNN's military analyst, Perry Smith, to be fully involved in the vetting process. Smith, a retired Air Force major general who'd flown missions in Vietnam, had been CNN’s adviser during the Gulf War coverage, and he enjoyed Johnson’s trust. Pamela Hill, a respected documentary filmmaker who had been producing the precursor to “NewsStand,” a show called “Impact,” was wary of working too closely with Smith, because she believed that he was too close to the Pentagon, and she worried that he might leak the script before it was broadcast. (Hill declined to discuss the program.) Johnson telephoned CNN’s lawyer, David Kohler, and asked him to let Hill know that General Smith’s involvement was an instruction, not a request. Two days later, Johnson, who was in touch with Smith, learned that the General had growing concerns about the story, and he did not believe that the producers had given Smith full access to their work. Johnson then spoke with some of the producers and with Rick Kaplan, who says he had heard about the story only a few days earlier. This time, Kaplan supported the producers. Kaplan and Johnson got into a heated discussion, with Kaplan saying that Smith had a vested interest in the story, and that he would “rather ask Roger Ailes for help” than work further with Smith. Later that day, Johnson told Kaplan that he thought highly of Smith, citing his patriotism and good intentions, and said that he felt Smith was being ignored. According to one person, Kaplan’s response to his boss included the words “This is bullshit.” (Kaplan emphatically denies this particular Kaplan story.)

It was natural that Kaplan would side with the “NewsStand” team. Hill is a former ABC producer whose “Impact” series was the only representative of long-form, analytical news in the pre-Kaplan CNN. Tension already existed between the “Impact” unit and the regular news bureaus, and when Kaplan joined the organization the “Impact” unit was the first and most enthusiastic enlistee in the Kaplan army. “Kaplan gets it,” says one member of that unit, “and so many of us here felt that people didn’t get us, or what we could do.” Johnson felt that the choice Kaplan was putting to him—trust Perry Smith or trust your own journalists—was no choice at all, and he went with his team.

PETER ARNETT’S defense after the broadcast was that he had scarcely participated in the report, contributing “not one comma” to either the script he read on air or the magazine story in *Time* that carried his byline as co-author. Arnett’s role in the broadcast rankles Johnson. “I never knew any reporter, in print or in television, who would come in and simply read a script or let a text be submitted for publication without changing a comma,” he said. “That’s not the way we work. Most of my correspondents felt that I should have fired Peter. Still do. Still do. He was spared only because of his entire record with us, and the fact that he was willing to volunteer to stay back in Baghdad.”

After the Abrams report was released, Johnson booked a ballroom at the Omni Hotel, at the CNN Center, and, characteristically, invited all his journalists to three town-hall meetings that he would conduct personally, in an open conference call that included all the CNN bureaus. The meetings were packed to overflowing, and the CNN staff unloaded a collective anger that was quite startling in its ferocity. “Management was pounded,” Johnson recalls of those meetings. “Pounded.”

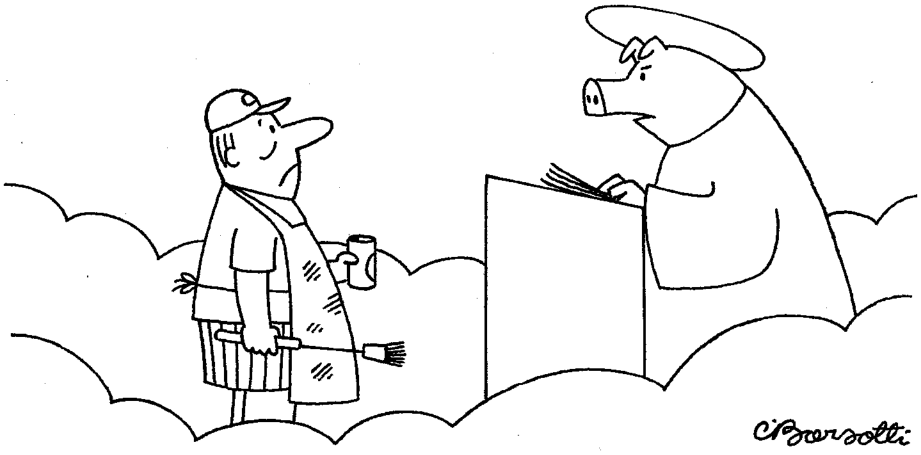
It was obvious that the tainted broadcast had touched some deep institutional nerve, bringing to the surface issues that went beyond the Tailwind question. And it was plain that much of the anger was directed at Kaplan. Some attending the town-hall meetings demanded to know why the big-shot executive from ABC hadn’t safeguarded their network against this embarrassment. Others asked why he hadn’t resigned.

Johnson defended Kaplan’s decision not to resign, explaining, according to one participant, that he himself had spent more than two years searching for the person to bring CNN “to the next level,” and had found Kaplan to be that man. Still, Johnson now knew, if he hadn’t before, that he had a Rick Kaplan problem. “It is very tough, and I am attempting to deal with that right now,” Johnson told me last week. “There are those within CNN—particularly those brought to CNN by Rick—who have got incredible loyalty, and want to work with him. It’s amazing, the loyalty that he’s built with many people. But what that has done is create the perception of two teams: the Kaplan team and the others. And it is a big problem for me right now.”

Two weeks ago, Johnson flew to New York and met with the Time Warner board of directors, before whom, for the second time, he offered his resignation. The board did not accept it, but one board member said, “This has damaged U.S. foreign policy around the world, because some people will always now believe that poison gas was used. It will strengthen Saddam and his people, who’ll say, ‘What a bunch of American hypocrites—they used gas, too.’ ”

Johnson described to the board the steps he planned to take, including the creation of a new position—executive vice-president of news standards and practices—to guard against another Tailwind. “Right now, I’m in the process of trying to get CNN back on track,” he said. “Morale is very low. Anger is high. Trust is shattered.”

RICK KAPLAN acknowledges that people think CNN has been invaded by “the ABC Mafia,” as he puts it—he recalls that Johnson himself recently said to him, “Geez, aren’t there



“Go ahead, finish your beer.”

a lot of ABC people here?" Kaplan is always pleased to set the record straight. He says he reminded Johnson that in the past year he himself has added to CNN's staff of thirty-five hundred people exactly seven former colleagues from ABC. Why, then, the perception of an invading army of "Rick people"? Kaplan has an answer: "You know what? People who work with me generally become 'Rick people.' "

He has a point. Two of Kaplan's former ABC colleagues who happily provided seemingly unflattering Kaplan anecdotes for this account both firmly regard themselves as "Rick people." One of them concluded her description of a particularly egregious Kaplan outburst by adding, "I'd go work for Rick in a heartbeat." Indeed, some of the people in Kaplan's sphere at CNN have felt the Kaplan lash most keenly. Sue Bunda, who earned Kaplan's "idiot" remonstrance, is now one of his star lieutenants, running the network's special-projects unit. "Obviously, Rick and I get along," she says.

Kaplan shrugs off the shock over his outbursts as a reflection of CNN's shabby-genteel culture. "This is a very refined place. They're nice. They're sensitive." The larger point, though, Kaplan insists, is that people who work for him eventually come to realize that he behaves as he does because he cares so much. "The more people get to know me, the more they'll be comfortable with me," he says. "That's not saying that to know me is to love me—I'm not *that* cuddly."

In any case, Kaplan got a dose of his own style at the town-hall meetings—"People got up and treated me like yesterday's garbage," he says—and he claims that he got the message. He says that he is coming to appreciate CNN's distinctive identity, and he has even come to accept the resistance that some at CNN feel about taking instruction from a man who was eating expense-account lunches at Café des Artistes back when they were proudly building their anti-network in Atlanta. And, finally, he is contrite about the greatest mistake of his career: "I could have held that piece, and let Tom"—Johnson—"have a chance to really sit and think about it instead of being uncomfy and backing off and saying, 'All right, if you want to go with those folks, go ahead.' I should have just held it, and I'm going to kick myself till the last breath I take that I just didn't hold the piece for a week."

"IT is my job," Johnson says, "to make sure that all these ABC people join with the other people I have and together make CNN even better than it was." But the conflict at CNN is not between ABC arrivistes and CNN natives; it's between two different journalistic orientations—one toward production and packaging values, the other toward news-gathering values. Johnson set the course for the new CNN a year ago, when he hired Kaplan, and it may be that his dilemma derives from his own misgivings about that decision. Johnson has let it be known that he feels Kaplan bulldozed him on the question of General Smith's involvement. Johnson is also personally put off by Kaplan's management style. ("Tom has said to me, 'Maybe you want to tone it down a little bit,' " Kaplan reports.) Yet Johnson insists that he is prepared to do "whatever it takes to compete," and he seems convinced that Kaplan is capable of bringing CNN to that coveted "next level."

One day recently, Johnson was passing Kaplan's office at CNN headquarters and noticed that Kaplan's assistant was opening a package that had just been delivered for her boss. Curious, Johnson waited to see what was inside. The package was from the National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences, and it contained an Emmy Award, Kaplan's thirty-fourth, won for work he did before coming to CNN. At CNN, an Emmy is like a talisman from another culture, the forbidden fruit pursued by journalists who work for the big broadcasters in those glimmering Manhattan towers. CNN, being a cable network, was not even eligible for an Emmy until its third year of operation, and it didn't win one until 1990, for its coverage—live, breaking-news coverage—of the Beijing uprising. The showmanship inherent in that package-opening scene in Kaplan's office (whether the result of design or of happenstance) may well symbolize the best chance for the Kaplan era at CNN. Kaplan's brand of television news, for better or for worse, *is* the next level—a reality that was made clear last Thursday, when nominations were announced for this year's news and documentary Emmy Awards. CNN was nominated for four Emmys. All four nominations were for "Impact" programs produced by the unit that subsequently worked on "NewsStand." ♦

Swim at Home™

Swim or exercise against a smooth current adjustable to any speed or ability. Ideal for swimming, water aerobics, rehabilitation and fun. The 8'x 15' Endless Pool™ is simple to maintain, economical to run, and easy to install inside or outdoors.

For Free Video Call
(800) 233-0741, Ext. 296

ENDLESS POOLS
Visit www.endlesspools.com
200 E Dutton Mill Rd, Dept. 200
Aston, PA 19014

LONDON FLATS
Short Term – Privately owned
COTSWOLD COTTAGES
THE LONDON CONNECTION
MR. THOMAS MOORE III
TOLL FREE PHONE: 888-393-9120
FAX: 801-393-3024
E-MAIL: london@relia.net

French Holiday Rentals

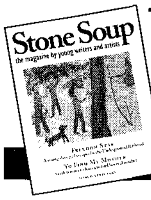
Experience *la vraie France* in your own chateau, cottage or farmhouse. Weekly or monthly rentals. All regions.

Call (510) 559-8080 or write
2124 Kittredge St, Suite 200
Berkeley, CA 94704
VILLE ET VILLAGE

Late Sept. Departure
Florence, Siena, Rome
San Gimignano, Umbria, more
CARAVELLA ITALIA

Escorted tours of Tuscany in small groups.

Call Toll-Free: **888-665-2112** www.seeitaly.com



The Magazine by Children
"The New Yorker of the 8 to 13 set"– Ms.
A perfect gift to inspire creativity
$32/yr (6 issues) • **800-447-4569**
www.stonesoup.com
STORIES · POEMS · ART

LONDON THEATRE NEWS
Stylish monthly newsletter features reviews, recommendations, theatre and restaurant listings, and a ticket booking service. $51 - 1 yr; $30 - 6 months. Please send check to:
London Theatre News
Suite 620, 12 East 86th Street, New York, N.Y. 10028.
Or call: 1-800-779-0077.

World's Largest Inventory
China, Crystal, Flatware & Collectibles
100,000 Patterns • 5 Million Pieces
Discontinued & Active • Buy & Sell
REPLACEMENTS, LTD.
1-800-REPLACE (1-800-737-5223)
PO Box 26029, Greensboro, NC 27420 • Dept. YO
www.replacements.com

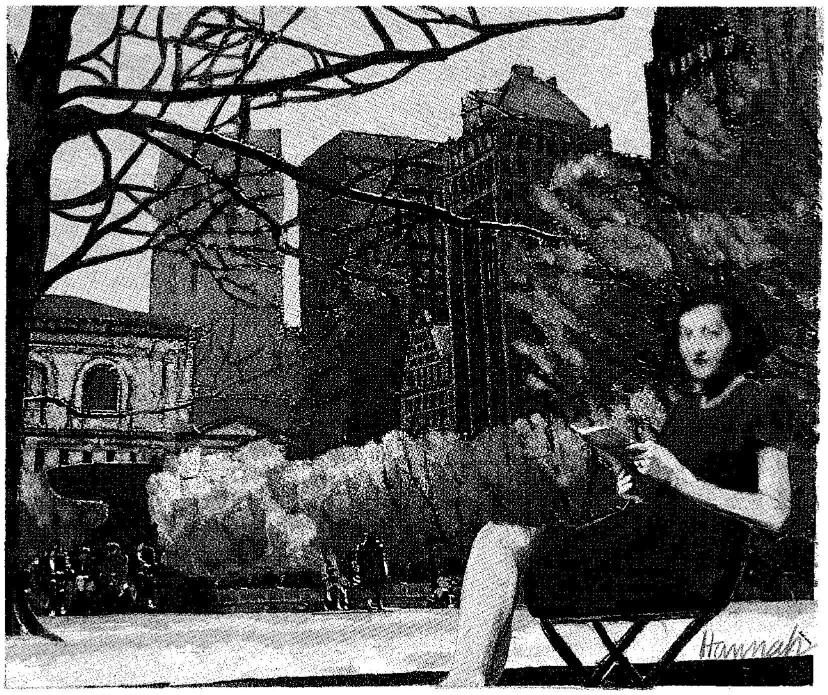
PERSONAL HISTORY

NO TASTE FOR ACCOUNTING

How Ezra Pound cost the author her first summer job.

BY CYNTHIA OZICK

THE summer after graduate school, when I was twenty-two years old, I wanted to get a job. I had just come back from Ohio State University, in Columbus, Ohio, at that time a hotbed of the New Criticism, where I had completed a fat M.A. thesis on the later novels of Henry James.



Summer in the city: Sandwiches and philosophy in Bryant Park, behind the library.

In those distant days, an M.A. was like a mini-Ph.D.; I had even had to endure a grilling by a committee of three professors. It was important not to go after a Ph.D., though, because it meant you were not in earnest about becoming a writer; it was, in fact, an embarrassment, a cowardly expedient that could shame you. The models for the young of my generation, after all, Hemingway and Faulkner and Willa Cather, had rushed straight into life. Yet when the chairman of the English Department summoned me into his office, I was certain that he was going to urge me to continue. To forestall him, I instantly offered my confession: I was not planning to stick around for a higher degree. I expected him to say, "But you did so nicely with Henry James, so you *must* stay." Instead he said, "Well, right, you should go home and get married." I was hurt: I didn't want to marry anyone; what I really wanted was to write a metaphysical novel.

But first I wanted a summer job.

Even though I was not serious about a Ph.D., I was very serious about the New Criticism. Its chief tenet was that you could pry meaning out of any sort of mysterious parlance, especially if Ezra Pound had written it. Ezra Pound and T. S. Eliot were the New Criticism's archbishops (and faith and mystery were what kept it going), but "Theory of Literature," by René Wellek and Austin Warren—"Wellek-and-Warren" for short—was its bible. Piously, I carried Wellek-and-Warren with me everywhere, and it was on my desk the very first day of my summer job. I had answered an ad by Margate, Haroulian, a firm of accountants. What had attracted me was its location: a short walk from Bryant Park, the green rectangle behind the Forty-second Street library. I plotted lunch hours on a bench under a hot and dreamy city sun, eating a sandwich out of a paper bag and inhaling the philosophical fragrance of Wellek-and-Warren.

The man who interviewed me was neither Mr. Margate nor Mr. Haroulian. He introduced himself as George Berkeley, Mr. Haroulian's second-in-command. (That wasn't his actual name. Like many elements in this history, it's a fabrication.) Disciplined blond wisps were threaded across his reddish scalp, and his mouth made a humorless line. He was dry and precise and acutely courteous. Though I had no previous office experience, he seemed pleased with my credentials.

"So you've got a master's," he said. "What in?"

"English," I said.

"That's fine. That's all right," he said, and asked if I could type. I said I could, and he explained what the work would require. I was to copy lists of numbers onto different printed forms, with three sets of carbons. He showed me my desk and the forms, each with its vertical rows of small oblong boxes. He opened a drawer filled with carbon paper and staples. "That's all you'll need," he said.

"But your *name*," I marvelled. "It's so thrilling to have a name like that!"

"I don't see anything special about my name."

"George Berkeley—Bishop Berkeley, the eighteenth-century idealist! He said no existence is conceivable that isn't conscious spirit. He believed in Universal Mind. He's the one that infuriated Samuel Johnson so much that Dr. Johnson kicked a stone and said, 'I refute it *thus*.'"

"I don't think we're related," George Berkeley said, and disappeared into an inner office. It was Mr. Haroulian's office. I never saw Mr. Margate, who seemed to have no office.

I put my sandwich into the drawer with the carbons and arranged my desk. First I placed Wellek-and-Warren next to the typewriter, so as to remind me of the nature of my soul. Then I plucked up three sheets of carbon paper, stacked them behind one of the forms, and got ready to begin. I had a page of num-

COLLAGE BY DUNCAN HANNAH

bers to copy from—clusters of numbers: some had six digits, some four, some ten, and each set of digits had to be typed into an oblong box. It was hard to keep track, and I discovered in alarm that I had typed the same group of digits twice. I found a typewriter eraser (a stiff round thing, with a miniature whisk broom at one end) and tried to erase the mistake on the form, but the eraser scraped the paper and almost tore it through; it made an unsightly translucent lozenge. Worse, I had forgotten about the carbons underneath. When I inspected them, they were hopelessly smudged. There was nothing to do but toss the whole mess into the trash and start over.

I started over many times.

"How're you doing?" George Berkeley asked, passing by.

"I'm afraid I've wasted some forms."

"Not to worry, you'll get the hang of it," he said. "The girl you're replacing didn't have a master's, believe me."

At lunchtime I walked to Bryant Park with my sandwich, and rapturously mooned through the densities of Wellek-and-Warren. Summer in the city! Pigeons preened in the grass; young women in white sandals and light skirts sauntered by; the shoulders of the great library baked serenely in the heat; an ice-cream wagon floated out its jolly carillon.

But by the end of that first day—it was Monday—I still had not managed to type the right numbers into the right boxes on a single form.

"Now, I don't want you to get discouraged," George Berkeley said. "All this is routine stuff, and I know you've been dealing with things a whole lot more complicated than a bunch of figures. I notice you're doing some studying on the side, and that's what I call desirable. I've been waiting a long while to get hold of someone like you, a smart girl who thinks about more than the color of her nail polish. It struck me right away that you don't *wear* nail polish, and that's why I hired you—that and the fact that you lug that book around and keep up with your studying. I expect you to get somewhere with this firm. I give myself credit for being a pretty fair judge of people. I can spot someone who's going to go far with us. Potential," he said, "that's what I'm interested in."

He dragged a chair over from a nearby desk and settled himself just opposite me; he was all earnestness. We were sitting almost knee to knee, with his big milky face so close to mine that I could see the pores, large and clean, in the wings of his nostrils. Healed pockmarks ran up the sides of his cheeks. He looked scrubbed and tidy, and it came to me that he might be the kind of man who went to bed under a framed slogan, like those I had seen in landladies' rooming houses in Columbus: "Bless This Home," or "God Loves Me," or the pure-hearted "Truth May Be Blamed, but Cannot Be Shamed." The truth was that just then, in the middle of a peroration intended for my improvement, I was feeling considerably shamed. I had been taken into Margate, Haroulian under false colors; I had committed a lie of omission. George Berkeley, himself in a position of permanent allegiance to Margate, Haroulian, assumed I was what he termed "entry-level," a young person in pursuit of advancement in business. I did not disabuse him.

"Now, let me tell you something about all these lists of figures," he went on. "They may not seem very glamorous, but they are our lifeline. They are the lifeline of our country. A really intelligent person can see right through to what these lists of figures actually stand for, and just as soon as you get the gist of all that I have every confidence you'll be as impressed as I am with how figures like ours keep this country safe and strong. Some people may think that keeping the books the way we do it around here is the exact opposite of the sort of charge a person like you gets out of . . . well, let's say poetry, a poem like 'The Midnight Ride of Paul Revere,' let's say. Well, I get the same charge out of business that you get out of . . . that's Henry Wordsworth Longfellow, isn't it?"

There was no way out. "Henry *Wads*worth Longfellow," I said weakly. "Wordsworth is a different poet."

"That's fine," he said, "that's very good. I like it that you're enthusiastic that way, and by this time tomorrow, watch and see, you'll be just as expert with our figures. Now, here's my suggestion. Suppose instead of going out to lunch tomorrow you join me in Mr. Mar-

RARE DALI PRINTS

If you own, or are considering the purchase of a Salvador Dali print....

SALVADOR DALI
A RETROSPECTIVE OF MASTER PRINTS

Our exclusive catalog features full-color pictures of more than 500 signed limited edition Salvador Dali prints. Each print is fully documented by **Albert Field**, curator of the Salvador Dali Archives, and guaranteed authentic. The catalog, "Salvador Dali: A Retrospective of Master Prints," is a must for anyone interested in works signed by Dali. Call now and we will rush you a **free** copy of "The Salvador Dali Collector's Newsletter". ($15 per issue)

1-(800) 275-3254
ask for Dept. NY

http://www.daligallery.com • FAX 310-454-2090
Brana Fine Art • 15332 Antioch St., # 108, Pacific Palisades, CA 90272

THE ROSE
Pin
Sterling Silver $45.00
14k Gold $220.00
Matching Earrings
Sterling Silver $75.00
14k Gold $440.00
Actual Size
Velvet Box
1-800-235-0471
Visa, MC, AMEX—S/H $5.75
ROGER NICHOLS
fine studios jewelry
17 NW Irving Avenue • Bend, OR 97701

MEN'S WIDE SHOES
EEE-EEEEEE, SIZES 5-13
- FREE catalog
- High quality
- 160 styles

HITCHCOCK SHOES, INC.
Dept. 69F Hingham, MA 02043
1-800-992-WIDE www.wideshoes.com

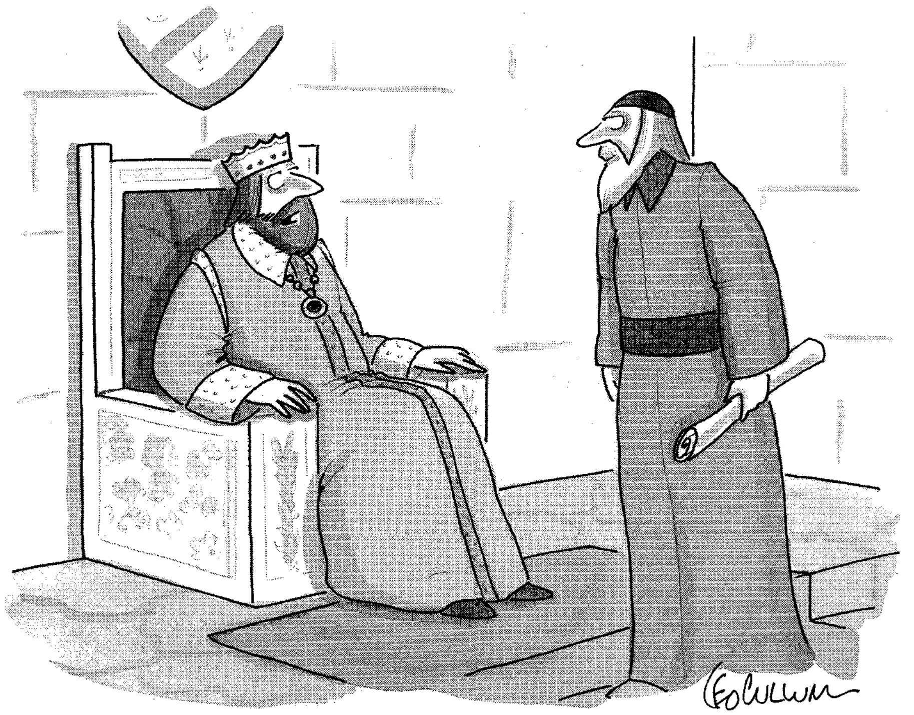
The Ancient Blanket Series™
by Sakiestewa Textiles Ltd.
Corporate and Holiday Gifts
For information and orders: 800-230-4049
Post Office Box 9337 Santa Fe, NM 87504

AFRICA ◆ CHINA ◆ INDIA ◆ JAPAN ◆ NEPAL ◆ SRI LANKA ◆ TAIWAN
Since 1989
UPTON TEA IMPORTS
Purveyor of the World's Finest Teas
1-800-234-8327
Free catalog listing over 220 varieties of garden-fresh, loose tea
www.uptontea.com
231 South St. ✻ Hopkinton, MA 01748

HILTON NEW YORK'S MoMA/BONNARD OFFER

Package includes hotel accommodations, continental breakfast, two VIP tickets (untimed and undated) to the Bonnard Exhibit at The Museum of Modern Art, and a Bonnard Poster. Hilton is one-half block from MoMA.

For information and reservations, call (212) 261-5870 or 1-800-Hiltons, or a travel agent. Ask for code PB.



"It's not enough that I succeed. My friends must also be drawn and quartered."

gate's office. I'll order in some sandwiches and we can have a talk about books—I'm a book lover myself. I'll bring in a couple to show you that've been helpful to me in my career here. You might find them just as useful as I have."

I said, "I didn't know Mr. Margate had an office."

"Mr. Margate passed away eight years ago. It's my office now, but we still call it Mr. Margate's office. Mr. Margate was the founder of the firm, and even though he got to be very old, he was remarkable to the end. He could carry columns and columns of figures in his head. One look at a column of figures and Mr. Margate *had* them. Mr. Haroulian is certainly a brilliant man, but Mr. Margate was a genius. He was married to an authoress—she passed on right after he did. It was Mr. Margate who gave me these books I'm going to lend you, and, believe me, they had an effect on my whole attitude and behavior in the office. One of them was written by Mrs. Margate herself."

I was reluctant to give up my Bryant Park lunch hour to sit in Mr. Margate's office with George Berkeley. Besides, I was discovering that my lie had a living pulse in it, and was likely to go on ticking: it appeared to be leading me to a future in accounting. That future was visible in George Berkeley, but it was still more visible in Mr. Haroulian, even though Mr. Haroulian was a kind of apparition. His door was always shut; whatever he did behind it was secret, significant, worldly. But several times a day a small bony man with copper-penny eyes and a domelike head would glide by, expressionless, monarchical, caressing his mustache and speaking to no one. Once or twice he halted in front of my wastebasket and stared down into the crumpled heap of my discards and sad mistakes.

On Tuesday at twelve-thirty, a delivery boy carried in a cardboard tray with two lettuce-and-tomato sandwiches on it, and two paper cups filled with a urine-yellow liquid, which proved to be apple juice. George Berkeley, it developed, was a vegetarian and a health theorist.

He asked where I had eaten lunch the day before.

"On a bench in the park," I said.

"Not in the sun?" he said. "You should keep out of the sun. It affects the nerves. And I hope you didn't have meat or cheese. My rule is, if it comes from anything that has a head on it, don't eat it."

He reached into Mr. Margate's desk drawer and brought out two well-worn books. It was plain that they had been zealously read and reread. One was "How to Win Friends and Influence People," by Dale Carnegie. The full title of the other, by Bertha N. Margate, was "Changing Losses into Bosses: A Handbook for Talented and Ambitious Young People Who Feel They Have Come to a Dead End Yet Wish to Succeed in the Business World."

"Mrs. Margate knew whereof she wrote. According to what she says here, when she met Mr. Margate he was making fifteen dollars a week, but with her on board to inspire him he ended up on top. Look at this! Solid mahogany!" George Berkeley slapped the ruddy flanks of Mr. Margate's glossy desk. "You just take these couple of books and look them through, and you'll feel the difference they make. But whatever you do, don't skip Mrs. Margate's Chapter 6, the one called 'Inspiration Increaseth Potential.' You'll notice she uses Biblical language all through. Now tell me," he finished, "how did it go this morning? How're you doing?"

"A little better," I fibbed, and opened to Mrs. Margate's table of contents.

"That's fine, that's just fine," George Berkeley said in his flat way. I wondered whether he was putting to instant use Mrs. Margate's Chapter 12: "A Cheerful Word Encourageth Subordinates." He wrapped his sandwich crumbs in a paper napkin, made a little wad of it, and threw the wad into Mr. Margate's otherwise pristine wastebasket with a force that startled me. Under all that restraint and hollow optimism, something boiled; behind those nondescript syllables what unknown yet colorful life lay in passionate ambush? Perhaps the god of figures did not suffice. I wanted to romanticize George Berkeley, but all at once he romanticized himself: he turned inquisitive, peering over the bow of Margate, Haroulian into the uncharted sea beyond. "I'm interested in that kick," he said. "What's that name again, the fellow who kicked the stone?"

"Dr. Johnson? Who refuted Bishop Berkeley?"

"That's the one. Well, I don't see it. How did that *settle* anything?"

"Berkeley insisted that matter wasn't real, only mind was real. So Dr. Johnson kicked the stone to prove the reality of matter. Or you could say to prove the falsity of the invisible."

"Lost his temper and let go—I can understand a thing like that. Whose side are *you* on?"

I was astonished. It was a question no graduate student would think to ask; I had never before considered it. But wasn't "Theory of Literature" on the side of the invisible?

"I guess I'm with Berkeley," I said.

"Well, I'm the Berkeley who's with the fellow who did the kicking. Is that what that book you're studying's about?"

"No, it isn't," I said. Here was an embarrassment: how to explain Wellek-and-Warren to the man who bore the name of a classical idealist yet was deaf to the cry of eternals and universals? "It's about a way of reading and analyzing what you read. It's called the New Criticism. You're supposed to read without being influenced by history or biography or psychology. As if the words were immutable. You're supposed to . . . well, you just concentrate on the language, and leave out everything to do with . . . I don't know, external entanglements. Human relations."

"The New Criticism," George Berkeley repeated. The white tract of his forehead slowly flooded pink. "Seems to me they're teaching the wrong things in the colleges nowadays. You'll never get ahead based on that kind of idea. You'd do a lot better, believe me, with Dale Carnegie and Mrs. Margate."

Though I was careful to set Dale Carnegie and Mrs. Margate on top of Wellek-and-Warren on the corner of my desk next to the typewriter, I did not do well the rest of the day.

Wednesday was the same. And again Mr. Haroulian slid silently out, circling and circling the narrow space in which I toiled and failed, toiled and failed. Again he looked into my wastebasket—that wild surf, all those ruined and wrinkled forms, those smudged and spoiled and torn emblems of my despair.

At noon I left Wellek-and-Warren behind and took Mrs. Margate, along with my salami sandwich, to Bryant Park. The midtown heat sizzled in the path. Even the pigeons confined their pecking to random blots of shade eked out by a few dangling dry leaves, or the edge of a bench, or a knot of men with briefcases standing fixed in conversation, sweltering in their puckered seersucker jackets. The brightness dazzled and dazed; pinpoints of painful light glanced out of the necklaces and wristwatches of passersby. George Berkeley had warned that the sun would trouble my nerves; or perhaps it was Mrs. Margate who was endangering the motionless sticky air. A dread fell over me. I could never live up to her ardor:

> CHAPTER NINE
> WHAT IS EXPECTED OF YOUNG
> WOMEN IN BUSINESS
>
> When the Psalmist saith, "Judge me, O Lord; for I have walked in mine integrity," surely he is looking ahead to the conduct of young women in business offices today. When we speak of integrity in this connection, we must always remember that it behooves young women to be accommodating, never condescending; to accept the meanest drudgery of paperwork with humble mien, for this is the instrument of your future ascent; and to treat with superintendents and superiors as with representatives of the power of aspiration. I well recall the case of Miss M.W., an attractive girl of twenty, who considered herself "spunky," and who consistently contradicted her employers, until one day she learned to her dismay that what she regarded as "courageous" was viewed by others as "impudent." Woe to the pert young woman in a busy office! (Young men, do not suppose that this advice does not apply to YOU!)

I noticed that Mrs. Margate's handbook was dated 1933, and was self-published. Probably Mr. Margate himself had footed the bill.

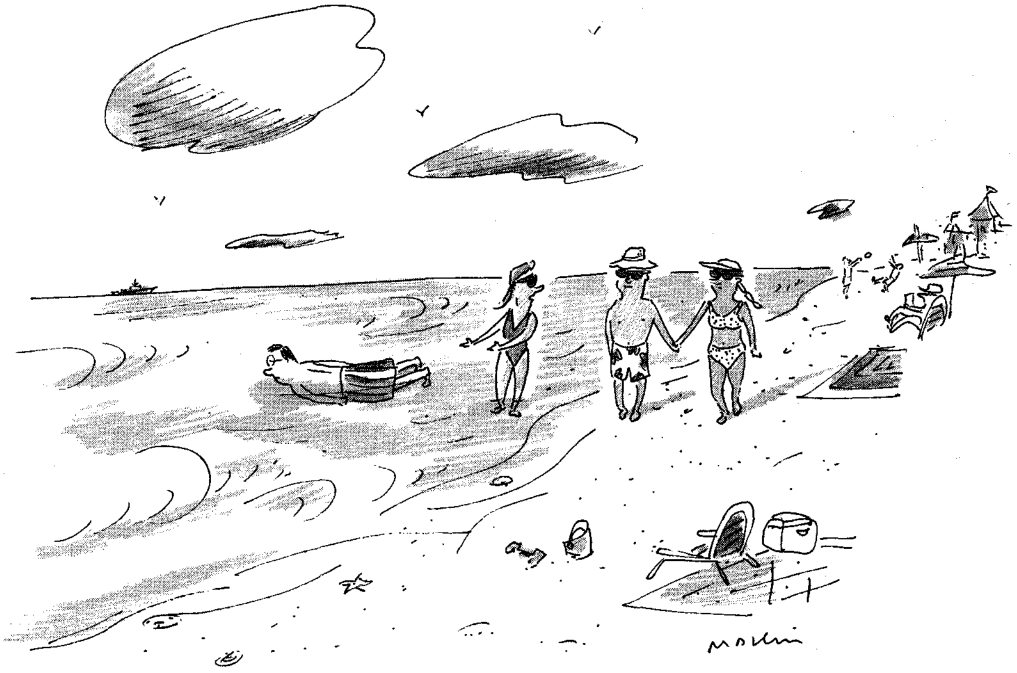
On Thursday morning, George Berkeley approached my desk. The shallow cheeriness was drained out of him. It was as if the engines of Margate, Haroulian had without warning changed course; he looked like a man dizzied by a wheeling horizon. Two thin streams of sweat voyaged down the immaculate gullies that bordered his little tight nostrils and the flat string that was his mouth. I saw the throb of his throat. On the broad windowsills a pair of electric fans turned sluggishly against an overcast cityscape; it was going to rain.

"Mr. Haroulian wants to see you right away," he said. He did not ask me how I was doing; he did not egg me on to loftier achievement.

"I'll just finish this sheet," I said. I was close to the bottom of the form, and was afraid of losing my place in the march of numbers.

"Right away! Get into Mr. Haroulian's office this minute, will you? I've had enough chewing out from Mr. Haroulian over the likes of you."

MR. HAROULIAN began at once to tell me about Lillian, his daughter. Since I had never heard him speak, his voice was a surprise: it ran loud and fast, like a motorcycle. Lillian, he boomed, was twenty-two; a student at



"Could you lend me a hand dragging my husband out of shallow water and into the open sea?"

Juilliard; a superlative violinist. When Lillian wasn't at school she was practicing—she hardly had a minute, not even to pick up her music. All her time was admirably occupied.

"Schirmer's on East Forty-third. Shake a leg and get over there," Mr. Haroulian growled. He handed me his daughter's shopping list; fleetingly, I took in flashes of Mozart, Beethoven, Sibelius. Lillian's photograph was on Mr. Haroulian's desk. A bony royal snippet, heir to the throne, eyes as round as coins—just like Mr. Haroulian himself. All that was missing was Mr. Haroulian's gray imperious mustache, which at that moment appeared to be sweeping me out of his sight like a diminutive but efficient broom. I understood that, in Mr. Haroulian's opinion, my time was not so admirably occupied.

Walking uptown to Schirmer's in the thick late-June air, with big raindrops darkening the pavement, I thought of "The Changeling," a story by Mary Lamb that I remembered from childhood. A nurse, ambitious for her offspring, switches two infants in their cradles. One is her own; the other is the daughter of her aristocratic employers. The nurse's natural child, dull and with little talent, is lovingly reared by the cultivated aristocratic family, though they are quietly disappointed in the undistinguished girl. Meanwhile their real child, brought up by the nurse, is deprived for years of the development of her innate musical gifts. When the ruse is discovered and the musical daughter is at last restored to her rightful parents, she is showered with music lessons and flourishes. Mr. Haroulian, I felt, in sending me on this humiliating errand, could not recognize that his daughter—exactly my age, after all—might be the inauthentic one, while I, plodding onward in rain-soaked shoes in service to *her*, might secretly be the genuine article. It hardly lessened my bitterness that Wellek-and-Warren meant a thousand times more to me than any violin.

That was Thursday. On Friday morning, my work on the forms unexpectedly improved. As George Berkeley had promised—before the great wave of his disappointment in the New Criticism—I was starting to get the hang of it, and the rows of digits were finally jumping into their proper boxes. Not all of them, to be sure; for every form I struggled to complete, two or three ruined ones went into the wastebasket. Yet even this minor accomplishment depended on my mastery of the typewriter eraser; I had learned, for example, to erase each carbon separately.

Ten minutes before the lunch hour, George Berkeley came to collect Dale Carnegie and Mrs. Margate. "You won't be needing these," he said, and swooped them away. That left Wellek-and-Warren exposed on the corner of my desk; he rested his palm on it. "Dale Carnegie may be a bit more famous, but he doesn't hold a candle to Mrs. Margate. I don't suppose you've even looked into her."

"Yes, I have," I said.

"And what did you think?"

I hesitated: my "spunky" might just turn out to be his "pert." The best answer, I speculated, would be to return diligently to the typewriter.

"Well, never mind. No one here cares *what* you think. Stop typing," he ordered.

I stopped.

"I've always had Mr. Haroulian's perfect confidence—I've had it right along. It's your sort of thinking that's put me in trouble with him. I've been on the telephone with Mr. Haroulian, and we've both decided that you ought to spend the rest of the afternoon just as you please. And you don't need to come back on Monday. Mr. Haroulian's attending his daughter's concert today, or he would be telling you this himself."

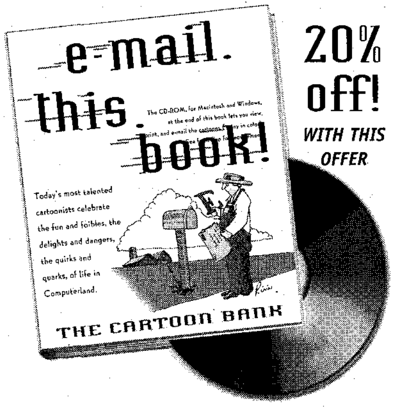
I knew he felt betrayed; he had put his trust in higher education.

Then, as if he were handling an unfamiliar and possibly harmful small animal, George Berkeley picked up Wellek-and-Warren and carefully placed it on the floor. He loosened his tie, something I had never seen him do. His damp neck glowed. "And by the way," he said politely, "here's what we here at Margate, Haroulian think of the New Criticism."

With one crisp thwack of his foot he sent "Theory of Literature" hurtling against the wall.

I crossed the room, retrieved the sacred text, and escaped into the somnolent molasses sunlight of a New York summer afternoon—a failure and an incompetent, and not a changeling at all. ◆

Your favorite cartoonists invade cyberspace!


e-mail this book!
The CD-ROM, for Macintosh and Windows, at the end of this book lets you view, print, and e-mail the cartoons
Today's most talented cartoonists celebrate the fun and foibles, the delights and dangers, the quirks and quarks, of life in Computerland.
THE CARTOON BANK

20% off! *WITH THIS OFFER*

Now, in the funniest, most cutting-edge-iest cartoon collection of the season, today's top talents come together for a uniquely uproarious portrait of life along the information superhighway (virtual roadkill and all).

The **book** showcases 100 "cybertoons" by the likes of Robert Mankoff, Roz Chast, Lee Lorenz, Jack Ziegler, Arnie Levin and Edward Koren.

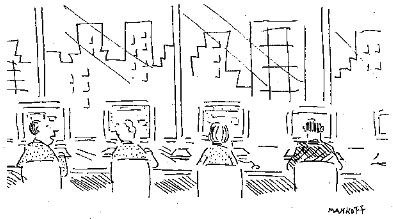
The **CD-ROM** (for Mac & Windows) holds the same hilarious 100 in high-res, mostly color files —perfect for all sorts of mischief, whether you print them, fax them or e-mail them across the world.

For credit card orders,
call toll-free
1-800-426-9922
(All orders must be prepaid)

Or send your name and address with check or money order for $13.60*—20% off the cover price of $17—plus $2.40 each for shipping and handling to:

The Condé Nast Collection
P.O. Box 10214, Dept. 475111-147
Des Moines, IA 50336

*Please add applicable sales tax in CA, CO, GA, IA, IL, KY, MA, MI, NJ, NY, OH. Allow up to 4 weeks for delivery.



"The e-mail isn't functioning—pass it on."

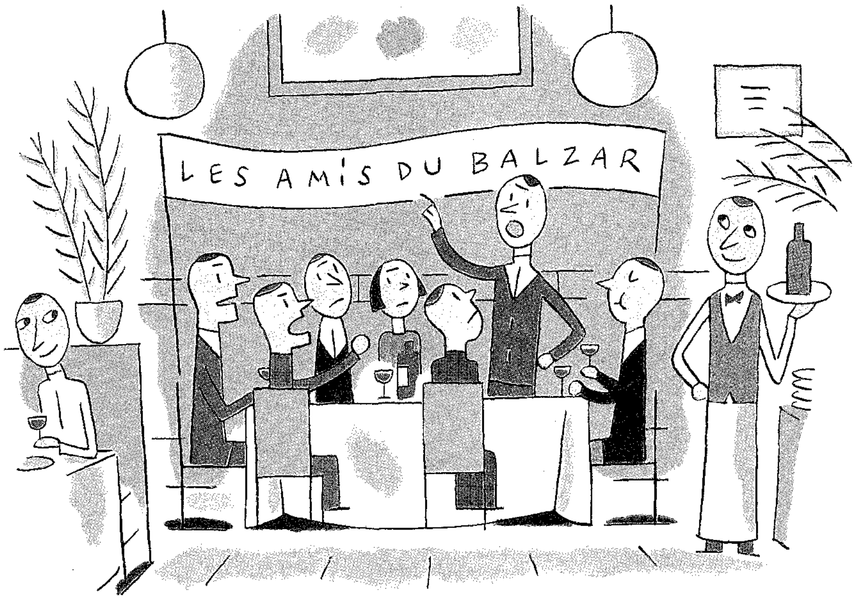
PARIS JOURNAL

SAVING THE BALZAR

In the battle for a beloved eatery, the author found himself joining the Resistance.

BY ADAM GOPNIK

THE Balzar, on the Rue des Écoles, in the Fifth Arrondissement of Paris, happens to be the best restaurant in the world. It is the best restaurant in the world not because it has the best food—though the food is (or used to be) excellent—and not because it is "hot," or even particularly fashionable, but because of a hundred small things that make it a uniquely soulful and happy place.



The Friends of the Balzar went to occupy the restaurant—and found that it's hard to patronize and protest at the same time.

PHILIPPE PETIT-ROULET

The Balzar is a brasserie, which means that it is Alsatian in origin, serves beer, and stays open late. Over the years, it has added a full dinner menu, so that it has become indistinguishable from a restaurant. For more than a hundred years, the Balzar has been a family business, and each of the families has managed to keep it constant without making it stale. It's a one-story, one-room spot, small by brasserie standards—with only ninety or so covers—and has a glass front that looks out onto the street; you can see with one eye people boarding the No. 63 bus in the twilight, and with the other a pretty little park dedicated to Montesquieu, with plane trees and pink-flowering chestnuts.

The Balzar is a democratic place. You are greeted at the door with a handshake and a quick squint of crinkled, harried warmth, by the two maîtres d'hotel—one always in a tuxedo, the other in a suit—and are shown to your table with a few pensive words about families, children, and the weather. There's not a trace of unctuousness or forced familiarity, no appraisal of your wallet, your last review, or your weekend gross. There are long banquettes covered with dark-brown leather along the walls, and a T-shaped banquette in the middle of the room. On the tables are white linen and glasses and silver. The light—from eight round globe lamps, high above—is warm and bright, gay without being harsh. The *carte* is a long printed card, with the dishes listed on the front and the wines on the back, and it never changes. There are leeks and tomato salad and herring for starters—foie gras if you're in an expansive mood—and then the same six or so *plats:* steak au poivre, roast chicken, grilled sole or salmon, calf's liver, *gigot* with white and green beans. The wine list is short, and usually the best thing on it is the Réserve Balzar, a pleasant red Bordeaux. The only sauces are the sauce au poivre on the steak and a béarnaise for the grilled salmon. The *pommes frites* are fine, the crème caramel is good, the profiteroles the best in Paris.

It is the waiters—or *serveurs,* as they're called—who give the Balzar its soul. A team of the same ten men has been in place for decades: they are courteous, warm-hearted, ironic (able to warn a client off a dubious *plat* with an eyebrow), and mildly lubricious. (They have been known to evaluate, sotto voce, the size and shape of a woman's rear even as they pull out the table to make way for it.) They work hard. By tradition at the Balzar, the *plats* arrive beautifully arranged on an oval platter and then are carefully transferred by the waiter to a round plate. This doubles the work but creates an effect. Whenever I am feeling blue, I like to go to the Balzar and watch a waiter gravely transfer a steak au poivre and its accompaniments from an oval platter to a plate, item by item. It reaffirms my faith in the sanity of superfluous civilization.

The other famous Left Bank brasserie, the Lipp, is known as a canteen for the men of power in the Fifth Republic, but when Lionel Jospin, the virtuous socialist who is trying to transform French politics, was running for President three years ago he made an event of being photographed, for *Paris Match,* having dinner at the Balzar. Everyone got the point.

On a Sunday night in April, my wife and I, with our three-year-old son, were sitting at a table in the back, just finishing one in a long line of good dinners, and were once again refining our long-term plan to be buried at the Balzar—or, more precisely, to have the urns containing our ashes placed on the dessert counter just above the mille-feuilles and the lemon tart, and on either side of the flowers. The plaques, we decided, should read "A Faithful Client" or, better, should repeat the words of those inscriptions you see all over Paris: "Here, fallen for France . . . "

Just then, Jean-Claude, the maître d' in the tuxedo, came over to our table. His gravelly *sud-ouest* voice was pitched low, and, to my amazement, his eyes were glistening. "I'd like to introduce you to someone who'll be working with us," he said graciously, and he summoned a melancholy-faced, lantern-jawed man, buttoned up in a good suit, whom I had idly noticed standing by the door earlier in the evening. "This is M. Delouche," he said. I shook hands with M. Delouche and raised my eyebrows at Jean-Claude.

"The Balzar has been sold," he said. "M. Delouche is here representing the new management." He walked away quickly, and M. Delouche followed.

I grabbed our waiter as he came by the table. "The restaurant has been sold?" I said. "To whom was it sold?"

"To the Flo Group," he answered, in a strangled voice.

The Flo Group! I felt as I imagined I would feel if I had been stabbed: first surprise, then nothing, then pain. The Flo Group is the creation of an Alsatian waiter turned restaurant tycoon named Jean-Paul Bucher, and in Paris it is often referred to as the "*rouleau-compresseur* Flo," the Flo steamroller. It is for many people the symbol of the forces of restaurant consolidation, globalization, standardization, and even Disneyfication—Flo runs five restaurants at Disneyland Paris. Over the past thirty years, Bucher has bought up some of the oldest and most famous brasseries and bistros in Paris, while also running a chain of lesser Flos, a catering business, and a chain of cheap restaurants called Hippopotamus. Some of the Flo Group restaurants—Julien, Le Bœuf sur le Toit—are actually pretty good. But even the good places have a processed, overwrought quality, and the food at one is pretty much like the food at the others. They lack all the things that the Balzar possesses so effortlessly: distinctiveness, eccentricity, and a sense of continuity.

A few moments later, one of the waiters, whom I had known for a long time, and whom I'll call Thierry, came up to me and suggested, under his breath, that we meet for coffee the next day. When we met, Thierry told me the history of the Balzar, seen from below. He was in mufti, wearing jeans and a jean jacket, a standard uniform for off-duty waiters, like blue windbreakers on off-duty New York cops. The Balzar had never been a perfectly happy place, he maintained, and the *syndicat*, the union, had suffered a good deal even under the old owners. Nonetheless, the *garçons* loved the work, because they liked the clients and the clients liked them. (I noticed that he referred to the waiters by the usually forbidden, old-fashioned word "*garçons*," or boys, and that he also referred to their métier as "*restauration*," or restaurant work. The two words together gave their profession blue-collar integrity.) He outlined their fears. The Flo people, he said, might close the Balzar "for restoration" and disperse the waiters to other Flo restaurants, all over Paris, never to be reassembled. "They express a savoir-faire that dates from 1968," he said. "Ours dates from 1894." It was said that the Flo people had arranged to have American tour groups brought to the Balzar; it was also said that they were standardizing the kitchen produce, bringing it in line with the rest of the Flo Group. More immediately, the *garçons* were appalled because the new man, M. Delouche, had been put "on the service," drawing his salary from their tips—the fifteen-per-cent service charge that is added to all French restaurant bills. (Thierry explained to me that the service charge was real and sacrosanct: before Flo took over, one of the *garçons* collected it at the end of every evening and put it in a drawer, to which each of them had a key. Now they have to wait five weeks for the same money.) It also turned out that the suit-tuxedo distinction among the greeters was a deeply significant code: a maître d' in a suit was aligned with the owner, one in a tuxedo with the staff.

WITHIN a week or so, a group of Balzar regulars, mostly editors and publishers and professors—the Balzar is around the corner from the Sorbonne—arranged to meet at the apartment of one of the staunchest clients, on the Quai Anatole-France, to think about what we could do. It was a beautiful day, but ominous reports were coming in from all sides. Someone had had a doubtful sole; someone else had noticed that *oeufs crevettes*, hard-boiled eggs with shrimp, had been sneaked onto the menu. (No, no, someone else said, reassuringly, the *oeufs crevettes* were there twenty years ago; it was really a restoration.) More seriously, it was said that the

THE CLOISTER

The last light of a July evening drained
into the streets below. My love and I had hard
things to say and hear and we sat over
wine, faltering, picking our words carefully.

The afternoon before I had lain across
my bed and my cat leapt up to lie
alongside me, purring and slowly
growing dozy. By this ritual I can

clear some clutter from my baroque brain.
And into that brief vacancy the image
of a horse cantered, coming straight to me,
and I knew it brought hard talk and hurt

and fear. How did we do? A medium job,
which is well above average. But because
she had opened her heart to me as far
as she did, I saw her fierce privacy,

like a gnarled, luxuriant tree all hung
with disappointments, and I knew
that to love her I must love the tree
and the nothing it cares for me.

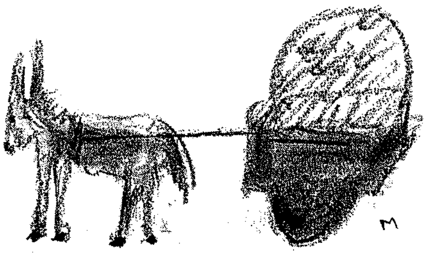
—William Matthews

waiters were being forced to rush checks to the table. It is a Balzar tradition that you can nurse even a cup of coffee and a plate of cold cuts for as long as you like. Now, it was said, after seventy minutes the waiters were forced to put the check on the table. This was—well, there was no other word for it—so *American*. You see this in California, someone said; he had eaten once in Santa Monica, and the young woman slapped the bill on the table after an hour and a half. (I could only imagine the waitress, on her way to her Tai Chi or acting class, dying on the vine while a couple of Frenchmen sat polishing off a bottle and solving the world's problems.) More horror stories were told: a keen-eyed regular claimed to have spotted a Flo Group camion parked outside the Balzar at six o'clock one morning, bringing in Flo produce.

It was obvious that something had to be done, but what? One person suggested a boycott; another person a sit-in; someone else a campaign of letter writing. We had a left, a right, and a center even before we had a party. Finally, a leader emerged, a handsome, round-faced young publisher named Lorenzo Valentin. He had an excellent plan: why not invite all the regulars we could find to reserve tables on the same night, occupy the restaurant, make a scene, and demand that Bucher meet with us? Fine, someone else said, but added that if we did it we had to be sure not to leave the waiters, on whose behalf we were acting, "in an ambiguous position." If we sat in, occupied the restaurant, and didn't order anything, they would be the ones to suffer. Therefore, we also had to order and eat dinner. Good, one woman said, but we had to be sure to hold on to the tables for the entire evening. "Eat, but eat slowly" would be our motto. Why not order foie gras on toast, she suggested; that could be spread very slowly. She mimed just how to do it, like a veteran of many a foie-gras slowdown on the barricades. We all watched her studiously.

During the next two weeks, as I helped to organize the occupation, I felt exhilarated, though I recognized in my exhilaration a certain hypocrisy. Like every American in France, I had spent a fair amount of time being exasperated by the French because of their inability to accept change, their refusal to accept the inevitable logic of the market, and their tendency to blame Americans for everything. As I raged against the changes at the Balzar, I began to hear people repeating to me the same tiresome and sensible logic that I had been preaching so long myself: that nothing stays the same; change must be welcomed; one must choose to live in the world as it is or live in a museum whose walls increasingly recede inward . . . It was all true, and, when it came to the Balzar, I didn't care. I would like to say that the difference was that my concern was now attached to particular people—to Thierry and Jean-Claude and the rest. But that would be giving myself too much credit for disinterestedness. The difference was not that it was happening to the Balzar. The difference was that it was happening to me. I was being asked to give up the continuity of a thousand small associations and pleasures—the night we went after we signed the lease, the night we went, still jet-lagged, after a summer away—and I didn't see why I should.

"Can't repeat the past?" says Gatsby. "Why of course you can!" And every American schoolchild is taught that in this belief lies Gatsby's tragedy. But why should the thought be so absurd? Can't repeat the past? We do it every day. We build a life, or try to, of pleasures and duties that will become routine, so that every day will be the same day, or nearly so, "the day of our life," Randall Jarrell called it. There seemed to me nothing stranger about my wanting to eat forever at an unchanged Balzar than about my wanting to stay married to the same wife or be father of the same kid. ("M. Bucher has now bought your family, and will be adding a new child to the staff on the same terms. Change is good. Here, try Ralphie for a while. He comes from the centralized nursery and only speaks German, but you'll soon find that . . .") On the day of my life, I eat dinner at the Balzar—the Balzar as it is and was, and not some improved, Flo Group version. I realize that one of the tricks of capitalism is to lure you into a misleadingly unreciprocated love with a cash register, but what impressed me about my friends in the Balzar war was that they weren't prepared to treat their attachment as somehow less real than the cash register.



JUNE 25TH was picked as the day for our occupation of the Balzar. We carefully arranged to stagger our phone calls to reserve tables for that Thursday night, to avoid tipping our hand. When my turn came, I was so nervous that I had to dial twice and then, in a high-pitched quaver, I reserved my table. ("*Oui*, Madame," said an obviously bemused maître d'.) On the night, I arrived with a couple of American friends. The tables filled up with regulars, gaily overacting the part of ordinary diners—Oh, how *sympa*, you're here, too, we said to each other, exchanging meaty, significant winks. We ordered apéritifs and made nervous conversation. Finally, at nine o'clock, the last regular sat down, and, with two taps on a glass, Lorenzo Valentin rose. The revolution was under way.

"We are here tonight," he said, "to demonstrate our sympathy with the waiters, clients, and tradition of the Balzar." Valentin stepped away from his table and addressed Bucher's man, M. Delouche, directly. Delouche clasped his hands behind his back and thrust out his chin, both obsequious and defiant. When I saw him like that, bearing the brunt of a sudden wave of disapproval—and, surely, thinking, I'm the working stiff here, these people are rich *gauchistes*, easy for them—I have to admit that a small whitecap of sympathy for him rose in my mind.

"This is not a personal assault on anyone," Lorenzo declared. "We have gathered here tonight as, shall we say, an opportunity to discuss the issue at the heart of our concerns about the recent purchase of the Balzar by the Flo Group. Our question is: Is this merely a place to eat or is it something more—and, if it is something more, what is it? Our organization, Les Amis du Balzar, is here to safeguard the quality and, what's more, to defend the spirit and the staff of a place that we believe offers a respite from time itself." This was grandly said, and he got a big hand.

M. Delouche attempted to defend his position, but his voice was mostly inaudible: all you could make out was "logic," "safeguard," "continuity."

"But what about the staff?" Lorenzo demanded. "What of their continuity?"

"*Les serveurs! Les serveurs!*" The cry

went up from around the room as we pounded the tables and hit cutlery against glasses. The waiters, their eyes fixed studiously on the floor or on the tables, continued to serve.

“Why can’t this place be different from other places bought by Flo?” another protester said, rising to his feet. “We all know what Flo does. How many people here are former clients of La Coupole?”

“*Anciens! Anciens!*” we chanted in unison, pounding the tables some more, and meaning that we used to go to La Coupole and didn’t anymore.

We were building up to an impressive pitch of indignation, but at that point the waiters began to serve the dinners that we had ordered while we were waiting to begin our protest, and this weakened the revolutionary spirit a little. There was, I sensed, a flaw in our strategy: if you take over a restaurant as an act of protest and then order dinner at the restaurant, what you have actually done is gone to the restaurant and had dinner, since a restaurant is, by definition, always occupied, by its diners. Having come to say that you just won’t take it anymore, you have to add sheepishly that you will take it, *au point* and with béarnaise sauce. It was as if, at the Boston Tea Party, the patriots had boarded the ship, bought up all the boxes of tea, and then brewed them.

Nonetheless, we carried on. We loudly criticized the fish; we angrily demanded a meeting with Bucher; we rose and offered memories of the Balzar, and vowed that we would fight for the Balzar yet to be.

We were hoping for a little *médiatisation*, and we got it. Pieces about the protest appeared in the magazine *Marianne* and in *Le Figaro*. Then, unfortunately, Jean-Pierre Quelin, the food critic of *Le Monde*, who is a kind of Jonathan Yardley of French restaurant writing, weighed in, announcing that the food at the Balzar had always been terrible—but that he had eaten there since the Flo Group took over and now it was even worse, so to hell with everybody. Lorenzo thought that this might actually be a useful article for our cause: by defining the Balzar radical fringe, Quelin was allowing us to occupy the rational center.

To the surprise of my American self, Bucher sent back word that he would be delighted to meet with our association—to have breakfast with what amounted to our Directorate at the Balzar itself. At nine on a recent Saturday morning, we assembled at the Café Sorbon, across the street, and then trooped over to meet the enemy. Bucher turned out to be a simple round Alsatian, wearing an open shirt, and he spoke with the guttural accent of Alsace. We all shook hands—he had a couple of his P.R. people sitting behind him at a second table—and then Lorenzo Valentin, with quiet dignity, began his speech.

“We are here,” he said, “as representatives of our association, to argue that your regime is not compatible with the spirit of the Balzar. This is not meant to be offensive to you—”

“Not at all,” Bucher said politely.

“But, without denying your right of property, we claim for ourselves a kind of right of usage.” And, from that premise, Valentin carefully outlined our thesis that what mattered was the *esprit* of the Balzar, and that the *esprit* of the Flo Group was, on the evidence, not compatible with that *esprit* we were defending. We asked him to keep the Balzar an autonomous brasserie, outside the Flo Group proper, and to make no changes in the staff, in the décor, or in the spirit of the place. After stating these demands, Lorenzo looked at him squarely.

I don’t think any of us were prepared for what happened next. Bucher looked us over, up and down the table. “No problem,” he said, a friendly, gap-toothed smile creasing his face. “No problem. Tell me, my friends, why would I want to change something that is working so well right now, something that works so effectively? I bought the Balzar because it’s the crown jewel of Parisian brasseries. I bought the Balzar because I love it. What motive would I have to want it to be different? I’m here because if I weren’t McDonald’s would be—and that would be too bad. I sincerely think that we are defending the same thing.”

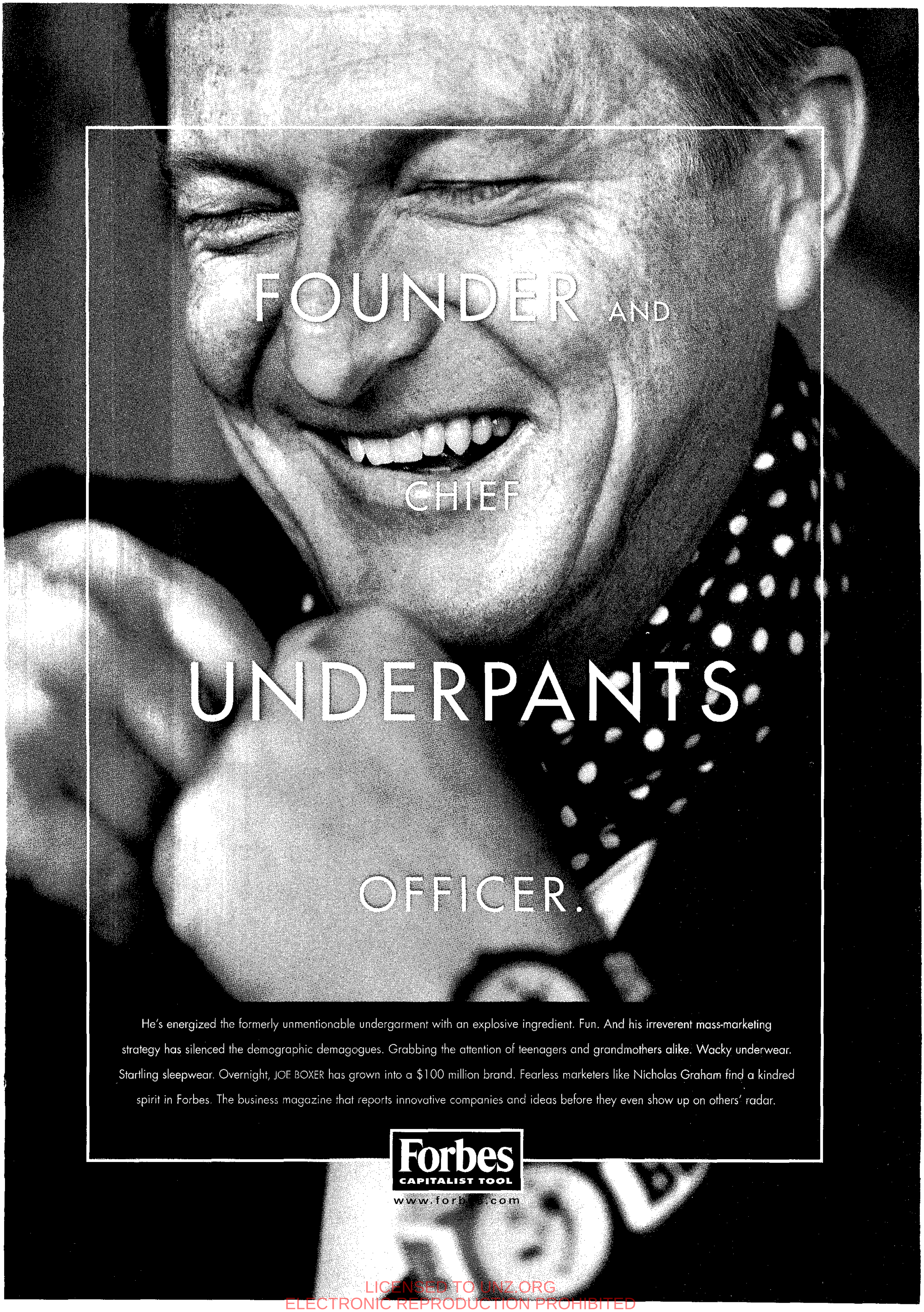
Our committee exchanged glances. Lorenzo pressed his point. “It’s not just the cuisine,” he said. “It’s something more. A certain relaxation, the feeling of time suspended, the spirit of a place. You see, five hundred and fifty people have already joined Les Amis du Balzar.”

Bucher nodded emphatically. “I know—you are to be congratulated,” he said. “What an accomplishment!” After some more conversation about the cooking—he had brought out the chef de cuisine, who was understandably upset about the piece in *Le Monde*—he said, “I am sixty years old. I give you a guarantee that I will keep the Balzar as it is. This wasn’t a good buy for me. My accountants advised against it. My analysts advised against it. My heart and my soul told me to do it, and they’re with you. A restaurant this small—it makes no sense for my chain. A hundred covers. It makes no sense for me except as the jewel in the crown of my Parisian brasseries, whose quality and values I’m going to defend.”

We mumbled something and, after more handshaking, withdrew to the sidewalk. We had not anticipated the strategic advantage to Bucher of total, enthusiastic assent. We wanted to save the steak au poivre on the oval plate and the waiter serving it, but you couldn’t argue with the man when he pointed to the steak, the plate, and the waiter and said nothing’s changed. (Thierry, when he heard of our breakfast with Bucher, said, “It is the old technique of the kings of France: treat your worst enemy like your best friend.”)

I did not doubt that Bucher was being perfectly sincere, as far as it went, and that in his case as-far-as-it-went went as far it could. The Balzar would stay the same, until it changed. The waiters seem encouraged by our actions. When I go to the Balzar now, Thierry, bringing a coupe champagne, slips by and, under his breath, makes a toast: “*À la santé de l’association*—to the health of the association!” We repeat the toast, under our breath. It is like being in the Resistance. (But when M. Delouche comes over we shake his hand, too. Perhaps that is also like being in the Resistance.)

Les Amis du Balzar has sent an eloquent new letter to Bucher, written by Lorenzo Valentin, and describing the “*objet de nos préoccupations*”: that no dish will come from a centralized kitchen, and that there will be real autonomy for the staff, and real autonomy in the management. My Parisian self is prepared to defend the Balzar to the end, whatever it takes. My American self suspects that the Balzar will stay the same, and then it will change, and that we will love it as long as we can. ◆



He's energized the formerly unmentionable undergarment with an explosive ingredient. Fun. And his irreverent mass-marketing strategy has silenced the demographic demagogues. Grabbing the attention of teenagers and grandmothers alike. Wacky underwear. Startling sleepwear. Overnight, JOE BOXER has grown into a $100 million brand. Fearless marketers like Nicholas Graham find a kindred spirit in Forbes. The business magazine that reports innovative companies and ideas before they even show up on others' radar.

Forbes
CAPITALIST TOOL
www.forbes.com

LIFE AND LETTERS

THE ENIGMA OF FRIENDSHIP

For the author, V. S. Naipaul was the most brilliant, contradictory, passionate, demanding person he had ever met. Their friendship began in Uganda. It ended mysteriously in Wales thirty years later.

BY PAUL THEROUX

TRAVELS IN AFRICA

His smile was not really a smile, but V. S. Naipaul's laugh was more than a laugh. It was a surprised bellow of appreciation, made resonant by tobacco smoke and asthma. It made you wonder whether he saw something you didn't see. I learned this within seconds of meeting him at an afternoon party—thrown in early 1966 by one of my Makerere University colleagues to welcome Naipaul to Kampala, Uganda, where I was a member of the Department of Extra-Mural Studies, my third year in Africa. Naipaul had just arrived for a one-year visiting professorship at the university, courtesy of a dubious American foundation that was later rumored to have links with the C.I.A.

With a disgusted and fastidious face, he commented on how dirty Kampala was. "It only looks dirty," I said, quoting a shopkeeper in his book "The Mystic Masseur," which I had just read.

He was delighted. He gave me the next line, and the next. He recited most of that page. He told me later that he knew each of his books by heart, that he stored them during the slow process of writing and rewriting them in longhand. Then, with sudden insistence, as if demanding a drink, he changed the subject. "I want to meet people. Tell me whom I should meet," he said. "People who know what is happening here. People who read books. You can find them for me, can't you? Because I suspect a lot of fraudulence. One hears it. One has vibrations."

I introduced him to the head of my department, an Englishman named Gerald Moore, an evangelizer of African poetry. He mentioned to Naipaul that he had edited an anthology of African literature.

"An anthology," Naipaul repeated. "Really?" I understood his tone as one of utter disbelief and dismissal.

The irony was not lost on Moore, who fidgeted and said, "Some quite good poems. Léopold Senghor."

"Isn't he the president of something?"

"Senegal," Moore said. "And there's Rabéarivelo, too."

"Is he a president, too?"

"Dead, actually. Madagascan. I could give you a copy," Moore said. "It's a Penguin."

"A Penguin, yes," Naipaul said. "You are so kind."

"I also do some writing—poems—which I'd like to show you. See what you think."

Naipaul smiled. "Are you sure you want me to read your poems? I warn you that I will tell you exactly what I think."

"That's all right."

"But I'm brutal, you know."

Moore winced. But I thought: I, too, would like to show him my work. I was writing a novel, but hadn't shown it to anyone. And I did want to know exactly what he thought. I wanted him to be brutal.

At about five o'clock, our host, a professor in the English department (and another evangelizer), asked everyone to be seated to listen to a radio program he had made with his African students. It was called "In Black and White," and its subject was African writing.

Naipaul settled into his chair, his face darkening in a look of intense concentration. Poems were read on a large wooden crackly radio. It was a hot afternoon, and everyone in the room was attentive, heads cocked to one side or bowed in a meditative way. Moore massaged his eyes with his fingertips. The poetry hadn't looked so bad in the pages of the university's literary magazine, but when declaimed on Radio Uganda it sounded hollow and clumsy, and its clichés were all the more feeble when spoken with an attempt at feeling.

When the program was over, Naipaul got to his feet, staggering slightly, and said, "Splendid, splendid."

He was surrounded by party guests, but by the time I reached the door he had broken away from them.

"It was a pleasure to meet you," I said.

He walked through the door to the veranda with me and my Nigerian girlfriend. I don't want to use her real name. I'll call her Yomo.

"I read 'Miguel Street' last night," Yomo told him. "The whole thing."

Naipaul seemed thrown by her innocent statement, and perhaps by Yomo herself, who was very dark, with high cheekbones and drowsy eyes; in her stiffly wound turban she towered over him. He stared at her pityingly and then said, "You must sip it like good wine!"

"Ha!" She laughed. "I don't sip wine! I drink up the palm wine!"

Naipaul's mask slipped and he laughed, too. Then, sizing me up, he asked what I had thought of the program. At first I hesitated. Hadn't he himself called it "splendid"? But I liked him and wanted to be truthful.

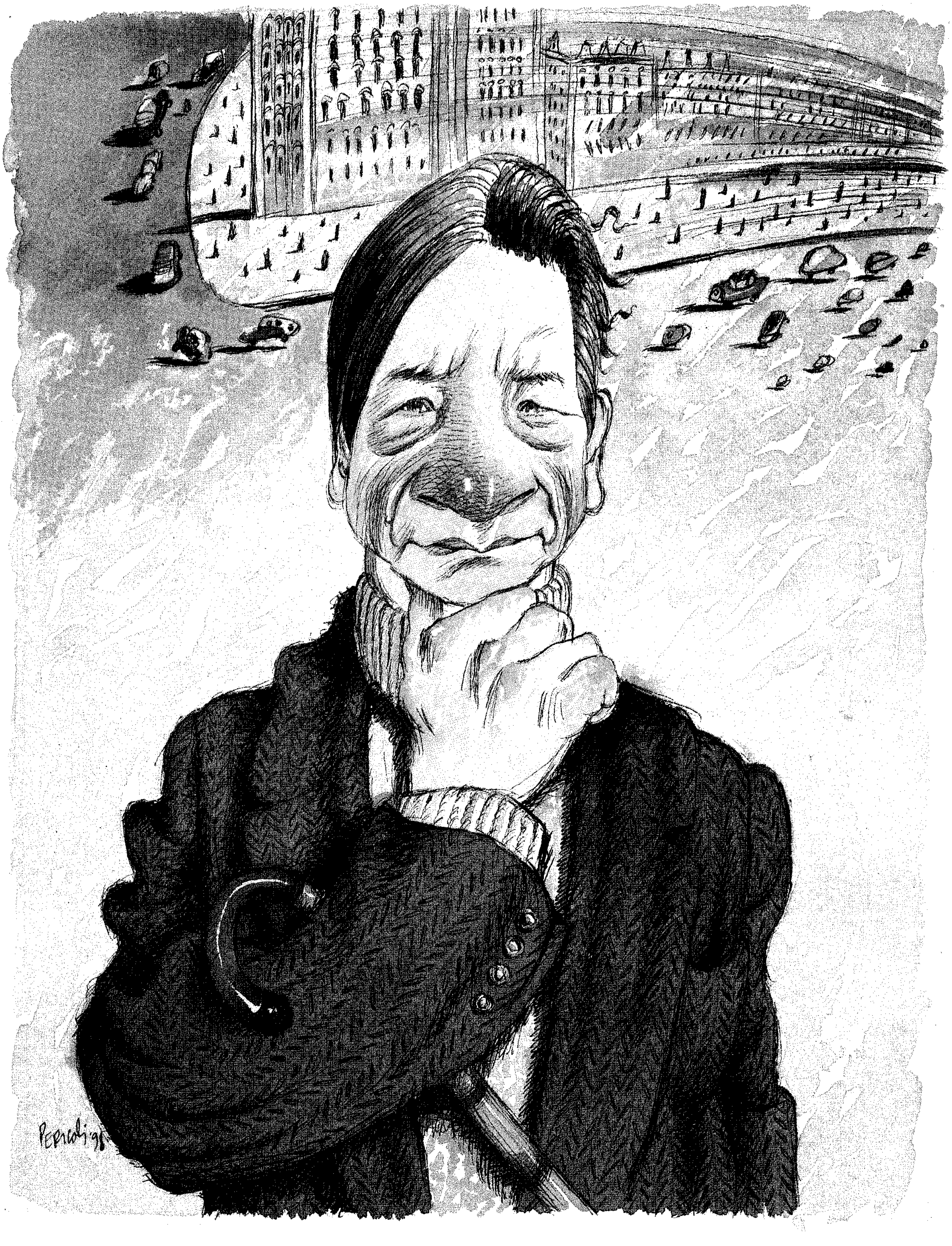
"I thought it was awful."

"Yes!" he said, and he laughed a deep, appreciative laugh. "Dreadful! Dreadful!"

He looked happier saying that, less lonely than he had appeared earlier. He touched my arm. "We'll meet soon. We'll talk." It meant everything to me.

I had known little about Naipaul beyond the fact that he had been born in the West Indies and educated in England, had won a number of prizes, and had written seven highly praised books. Within a few days I knew him much

ILLUSTRATIONS BY TULLIO PERICOLI


Pericoli 98

Naipaul could be brutal. "Your essay is hopeless," he told one student. "But you have lovely handwriting."

better. He hated the foundation that had sponsored his fellowship. He refused an office. He gave no classes. He ignored the other lecturers.

The university, he said, was largely a farce. Here were these overpaid expatriates patronizing Africans, giving the impression of imparting an education. It was theatre. They were flattering themselves with notions of their own importance. The worst of it was the complacency and the extravagant way African effort was praised.

"These fraudulent people are trying to prettify this situation. It's a huge whitewash, man. No—" The laughter began to tumble. "It's blackwash, that's what it is. Blackwash." (Although I kept no diaries at the time, Naipaul's unusual phrasing made many of his declarations memorable.)

I showed him some of my poems. One began with the line "The girl who came with doves to sell will die." Another opened with "Mirrored images of bitches' murderous beauty."

He said, "Lots of libido."

That made me smile.

He said, "But I have given up sex, you see."

We were alone, driving to the market. "What about your wife?" I asked.

His wife, Patricia, was small and pale with a sweet face, prematurely gray hair, lovely pale-blue eyes, and full lips with the sort of droop that even in repose suggests a lisp. She was pretty, about ten years older than I was—thirty-four or thirty-five, his age—and, though she was assertive, she seemed frail.

"I give her a chaste kiss at night."

We were now surrounded by market traders showing us baskets of fruit. Flayed, stringy goat and sheep carcasses hung from iron hooks, and chunks of meat were stacked under the sign "Boys' Meat." Naipaul liked the sign. He lingered, murmuring the expression. He said he was a vegetarian.

"The sinew. I could never chew through it."

He walked through the stalls, frowning. He had an inspector's gait, hands clasped behind his back, moving fast yet looking at everything. He was inquisitive; he was brisk. He found the fish flyblown. He said that the plantains reminded him of his childhood in Trinidad.

"We've done the market," he concluded after a while. He was able to size a place up fairly quickly and was then ready to go.

The whites he had met in Uganda, he said, drank too much. They were intellectually dead. They were common. They were inferior. "Infies" was his name for them. "Listen to the infy," he said while an expatriate held forth in the Senior Common Room.

I had never met anyone so certain, so intense, so observant, so impatient, so intelligent. He was stimulating and tiring to be with, like a brilliant, demanding child—needy, exhausting, funny.

He asked to see more of my writing, and when I gave it to him he read it in front of me. "Keep it up," he said.

I had read three of his books. "The Suffrage of Elvira" was plotty and sprawled improbably. But "Mr. Stone and the Knights Companion," set in London, could have been written by a wise old Englishman, and its observations about age and frailty gave it a morbid power. The third, "The Mystic Masseur," was charming, full of curious characters. All three books were confident, fresh, simple, oblique narratives of transformation. They described a world I knew nothing about. They were original and powerful, too plain to be brilliant, with a pitiless humor that gave them pathos. I could see no literary influences, no antecedents. Searching for clues, I asked him what he read.

"One is reading the Bible. It's frightfully good, you know. And Martial—delicious." He quoted salacious epigrams and poems, many of which were about buggery. He said they were lyrical and "so concise."

Surely there were other writers he admired? "It would be easier for me to tell you who I don't like," he said, and then listed, with a sour-taste-in-the-mouth expression, Jane Austen, Thomas Hardy, Henry James.

I kept after him. He shrugged. "Shakey, of course," he said. "Jimmy Joyce. Tommy Mann. Forget Nabokov. Read 'Death in Venice.' Pay close attention to the accumulation of thought."

His interest was located solely in his own writing. It was an error to look for any influences. Some people mistook the apparent spareness of his sentences for a faltering imagination, or a lack of stylistic ambition, or sheer monotony. But he said he was deliberate in everything he wrote, calculating each effect. He detested falsity in style; he loathed manner in writing.

It took me a little while to understand his utter faith in himself, but the day I did, and acknowledged that his writing was unique, was the day our friendship began.

KAMPALA was a prosperous place, busy on weekdays, full of picnickers on weekends, strolling Africans, promenading Indians. It was a town not of dinner parties and social functions but of night clubs, restaurants, and brothels. It was a green town of friendly faces and natural wonders—roads carpeted with white butterflies, trees full of bats, crested cranes in the parks, and, in the low-lying watery places, masses of papyrus that had somehow crept up the White Nile from Egypt. Into this drowsy place came the forbidding figure of V. S. Naipaul, wearing bush shirt, trousers, and hat, and carrying a walking stick.

One afternoon we went for a drive. He liked the view. He got out of the car and stopped a passing African.

"What is the name of that valley?"

"I am not knowing the name, sah."

"But what do you call it?"

"We are calling it just 'the valley,' sah."

When the man had moved on, Naipaul waved his stick in a generalizing way over the lovely landscape and said, "Nothing has a name. They don't name things."

"They name some things."

"Tell me."

"The hills in Kampala."

"That's very much a colonial thing. The Africans were told those names. Wait—what's that noise?" He lifted his hat brim and winced. "Bongo drums!"

"Bongo drums" was his term for the sound of a radio, for people singing or dancing, or for drums—which were never bongo drums but usually hollow logs beaten with sticks. What he was hearing was Congolese music, trumpets and drums and marimbas, blaring from a radio in a hut.

"Music," I said.

"I hate music," he said as we walked on. "All music. Not just that shit."

It was not a pose. He hated most sound. Laughter appalled him, too, although he himself laughed a good deal.

NAIPAUL liked to tease the expatriates with the notion that they were homosexual, living out a fantasy of sexual license. He laughed at the thought that they regarded themselves as liberals and intellectuals.

I said, "So you would agree with George Wallace in thinking of them as 'pointy-headed intellectuals.' "

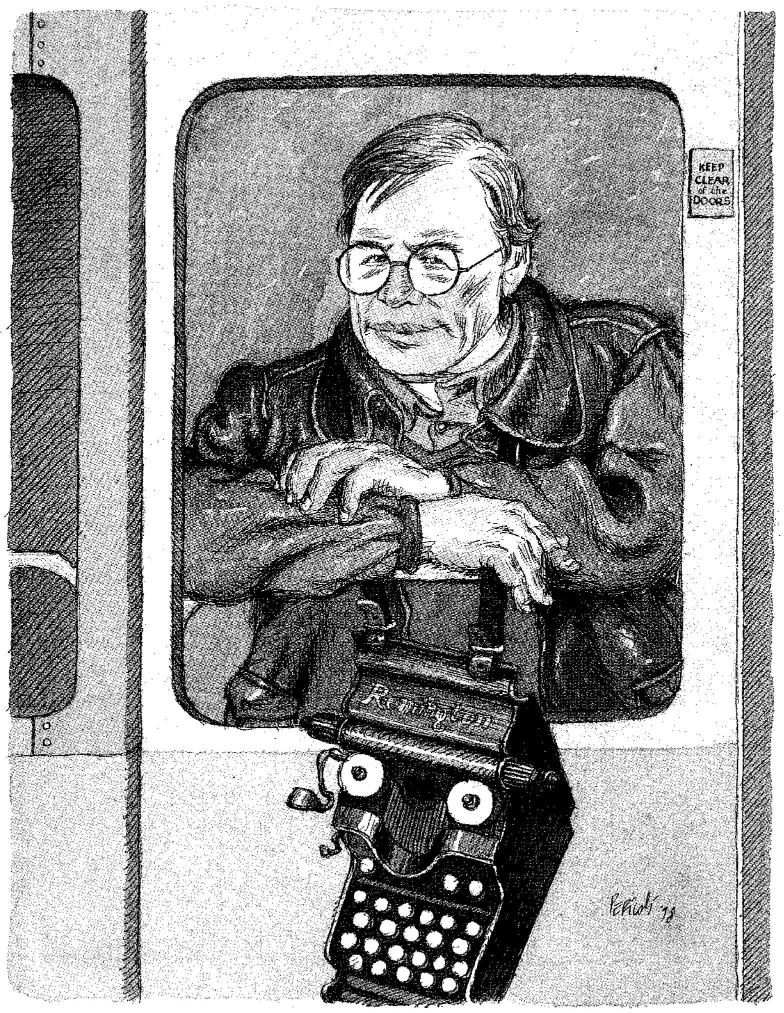
He loved that. He repeated it twice, smiling grimly. "How do you stand it, Paul?"

I was about to say that I was happy in Uganda. That it seemed like a dream at times. I was in love with Yomo. I liked my job. I was grateful to be in Uganda teaching, instead of in Vietnam fighting. But before I could say anything Naipaul piped up, "Your writing, of course. If you didn't write, you'd go out of your mind."

My writing at the time was an essay on cowardice for the American magazine *Commentary*. One afternoon, Naipaul was helping me with it, frowning over the tenth version. He said that it was improving but that it would be better if I cut it by half. The problem was language, he said. Putting his fastidious finger on the page, he made me justify each word. "Why 'fat'? Why 'hapless'? Don't use words for effect," he said. "Writing is like sleight of hand. You simply mention a chair and it's shadowy. You say it's stained with wedding saffron and suddenly the chair is there, visible." He was passionate about misapplied words and meaningless mystification. I had lived too long in a place where the wrong words were used, he told me. Africans called Kampala a city. But it was not a city. " 'University' is a misleading word for this crummy place, and is this a government?"

We were at his house, which smelled of cement and red floor wax and new paint. The windows had no curtains. It was within earshot of the brick-and-thatch servants' quarters.

A female student arrived. She had come to his house because he refused to hold classes.


KEEP CLEAR of the DOORS
Remington

"I made love only to African women. 'Come home with me,' I'd say. The statement was blunter in Swahili: 'I am the meat, you are the knife.' "

"Your essay is hopeless," he said to her. He chose a few examples to illustrate how bad it was, and then he said, "But you have lovely handwriting. Where did you learn to write like that?"

Another student, celebrated as a rising Ugandan poet by one of my colleagues, had sent Naipaul a poem, entitled "A New Nation Reborn," and then showed up some days later wearing a crimson gown modelled on those worn by Oxford students.

"I've read your poem," Naipaul said. "I have been wondering about it."

"It is about *tubbulence*."

"Really?" He fixed the boy's eyes with his weary stare. He said, "Don't write poems. I really don't think you should. Your gifts lie in some other direction. A story, perhaps. Now, promise me you won't write any more poems."

The boy made the promise in a halting voice. He went away baffled and dejected.

"Did you see how relieved he was?" Naipaul said. "He was glad I told him that."

He disposed of other students in the same fashion. I was surprised when he agreed to be the judge of a university literary competition, but he carried out his duties in his own way. He insisted that there be only one prize, called Third Prize, because the entries were so bad there could be no first and second. When the appellation was converted to The Prize, he smiled and said, "Blackwash."

NAIPAUL complained so heartily about the noise at his house that I told him about my upstairs neighbors—a middle-aged man and a much younger woman—who constantly chased each other around. Yomo and I could hear everything they said, and at times it seemed that they were carrying on for our benefit. They made love noisily—she was a screecher. Their bed rocked and squeaked.

"Who are they?" Naipaul asked.

"New people. From Canada."

"Infies," he said. "Do you speak to them?"

"Sometimes."

"You should cut them."

"You mean not speak to them?"

"I mean not see them. You walk past them. They don't exist."

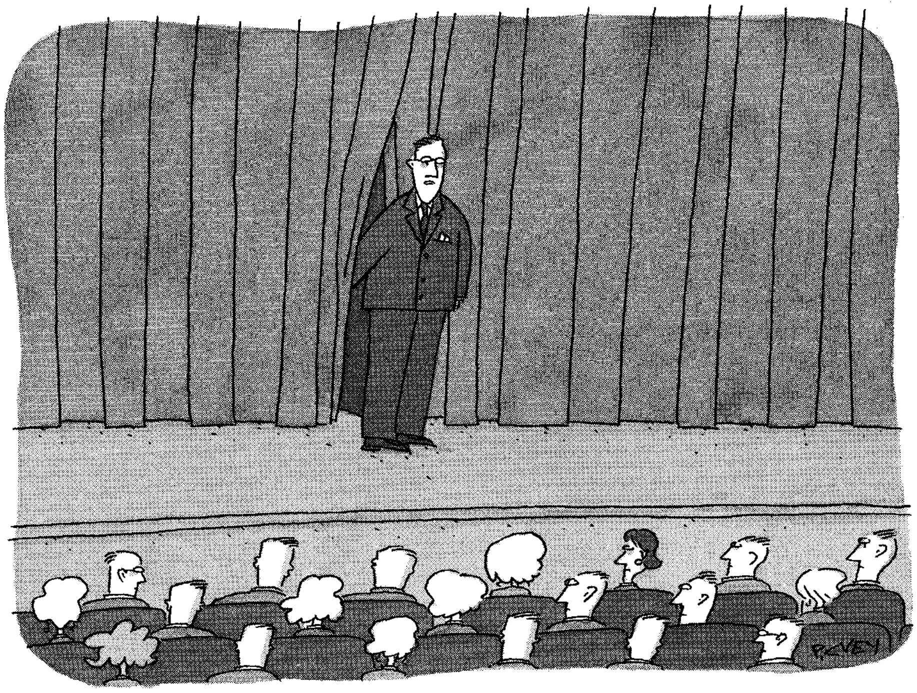
On one of those noisy nights, Yomo turned me away, hugged herself, and said she was ill.

"You might be pregnant," I said. "You have to see the doctor."

"I don't want the doctor."

"He's good," I said. He had treated me for gonorrhea and malaria. Yomo finally agreed, and dressed up for the occasion in her brocade sash, her expensive cloak, her best turban.

The doctor greeted her and took her into his examining room. If she was going to have a baby, I would be happy. It was not what I had planned, but I had no plans. Everything good that had happened to me had come acciden-



"Tonight the part normally played by the audience will be played by actors playing the part of the audience."

• •

tally. When the examining-room door opened, I smiled. "What's the verdict?"

"Four months pregnant," the doctor said.

Yomo looked at me shyly as he wrote out his bill.

In the car, I asked her, "How can you be four months pregnant?" She had been in Uganda only three months.

"I had a friend in Nigeria," she said.

"What are we going to do?"

She said nothing. She did not cry until that night, when her clothes were neatly folded on the chair, all that stiff cloth in a deep stack. She was in bed, hiding her face, sobbing. I did not know what to say. I loved her, but I had just discovered that I did not know her. "I want to go home," she said in a voice that broke my heart.

Yomo was one of only three passengers on the plane from Entebbe to Lagos a week later. Her posture was different, and she sighed as we moved toward the barrier, where I kissed her goodbye.

When I got to my house I knew that I had lost my love and would have to begin again.

Naipaul asked me where I had been. He had not seen me all week.

"Oh, God," he said, when I told him. "Oh, God." His voice cracked, his face was tormented. "Are you all right? Of course you're not. Paul, Paul, Paul."

He was truly upset. He was sharing the burden. That was the act of a friend.

He took my hand and turned it over and studied it, tracing it with his finger.

"That is a good hand. You must not worry. You're going to be all right."

"Thanks, Vidia." It was the first time I had used his first name.

Until I met Vidia, I had never known a person who recognized no one as his equal. He's a Brahmin, the local Indians said: all Brahmins are fussy like that. His fluctuating temperament fascinated me. Expatriates in Africa were generally even-tempered, and the farther into the bush you found them the more serene they were. It was unusual to find someone whose temper was almost constantly on the boil.

Things started to go badly. Vidia had been in Kampala for less than three months and his complaints had become a rant. He stopped working. He grew morose. One day, all he wrote was the word "the." "It took me seven hours to write that." He smiled insanely at it, as if to say, "See what they made me do!" The problem was his house. The noise was an assault. He hated the smells—cooking fires, rotting vegetation, human odors. "No one washes. Is soap expensive here?"

Pat said, "We've heard of a hotel."

The hotel was outside the town of Eldoret, in the highlands—the White Highlands, as they were still known then—of western Kenya. It was called the Kaptagat Arms and was run by an Englishman called the Major, a retired Army officer, Sandhurst trained, who had spent his military career in India. He was in his late sixties and very gruff. Stories about him circulated in Uganda. Recently a female guest had asked the Major for a Pimm's No. 1 Cup in the hotel bar. He had replied, "We don't serve that muck. Now get out," and showed the woman the door.

Vidia had told me that he loathed colorful characters. He hated clowns, comedians, yakkers, virtuosos, village explainers, and hollow jokesters, vapidly Pickwickian, who spent their lives monologuing in country pubs. Yet he liked my story about the Major for its rough justice. The woman in question was obviously an infy, and Pimm's No. 1 Cup was an infy drink.

The three of us, Vidia, Pat, and I, drove to the Kaptagat together. Near the Kenyan frontier, we came to the end of the paved road. Eighty miles of dusty road were still to be traversed. We found the place in the early afternoon. It was silent and looked abandoned: no guests, no cars, only flitting birds, and a few Kikuyu gardeners working in the flower beds. Inside, there were Banaras brasswares, carved ivory, wall hangings, as well as the sort of paraphernalia found in English country pubs: horse brasses, tankards, old blurred photographs of anglers struggling to hold prize fish upright, and a fluted glass that would hold a yard of ale.

I rang a tinkly bell, and a tall craggy figure marched out from the back office. He had white hair and a deeply lined chain-smoker's face. He stuck his chin out and said, "Yes, what is it?"

"We've just driven from Uganda," Vidia said. "We'd like to have lunch and look around."

"Give me a moment to get sorted out," the Major said. "What was the name?"

"Naipaul."

"Are you the writer?"

It was an inspired response. The heavens opened. A trumpet sounded.

"Yes," Vidia said, stammering with satisfaction. "Yes. Yes. Yes. Yes."

VIDIA found a room he liked. He negotiated a weekly rate, and soon he and Pat moved in, and of course moved out of the country to which he had been assigned by the foundation. The idea was that Vidia would finish writing his novel, and it was at the Kaptagat Arms that he told me its title, "The Mimic Men." He had started it in a hotel in Blackheath, having deliberately checked in to enter the mood of his narrator, who was a temporary hotel resident. It was appropriate that he was finishing the book in another hotel.

"This is an important book," he said. "These things have never been said."

I envied him his ability to feel that awe for something he was writing. I wanted that confidence. I visited at first on weekends, and then for weeks at a time.

He worked on an Olivetti portable, one of those lightweight flat machines that seemed modern to me and that went *chick-chick-chick*. I used an old black Remington that clacked loudly when I typed, going *fika-fika-fika*.

"I love to sit in the garden and hear you both typing," Pat said.

In the garden, beyond the hedge of purplish bougainvillea, she read, looking lonely and somewhat embarrassed, as though she were waiting for someone who would never show up.

"Keep Pat company," Vidia said.

I wondered what he meant. His claim that he had renounced sex teased me strangely. I regarded Pat in light of that disclosure and saw timidity and hunger and a hint of frail susceptibility. I was twenty-four and missed Yomo badly, although I sometimes took women home from the local bar.

Pat and I drove to nearby villages or to Eldoret, where there was a post office. We went for walks. It was not unusual to stumble across a boy chasing a girl through a field, or to hear, as we did one day, shrieks of pleasure from a cornfield. Pat appeared not to notice, as a well-bred woman will avert her eyes from two dogs copulating in the road.

I did not know about the rituals of English courtship. In the years I had lived in Africa I had made love only to African women. That sex had liberated me and given me a habit of straightforwardness. "Come home with me," I would say. The statement was blunter in Swahili. It was as unambiguous as describing the insertion of a cork into a bottle. "*Mimi nyama, wewe kisu.*" "I am the meat, you are the knife."

"No," one woman laughed. "*You* are the knife. *I* am the meat."

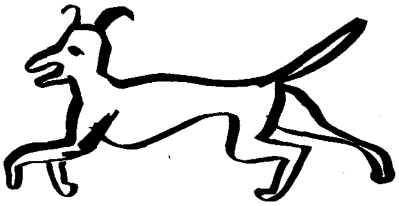
"*Sisi nyama mbili*," I said. "We're both meat."

Sometimes no words were necessary. Just being alone with a woman was enough. But with Pat I couldn't find a way to broach the subject. Her politeness was like that of a coquette, and it attracted me. She caught me staring at her one day and she became self-conscious. "My clothes have shrunk so," she explained, and tugged at them with her tiny fingers. Although it never went further than my lingering gaze, my feelings of desire made me guiltily hearty toward Vidia whenever we returned to the hotel.

I would not know until much later that in "The Mimic Men" Vidia's Indian narrator-hero's English wife, who somewhat resembled Pat (a whole page was devoted to the pleasures of her breasts), has an affair with a young American. The narrator looks on; the American who cuckolds him is "slightly too hearty toward me, who felt nothing but paternally toward him."

THE news in Uganda was bad. This was late May, 1966, during the confrontation between the prime minister and King Freddie, the Kabaka of Buganda. The government arrested three of the King's chiefs on charges of sedition. Villagers stoned the police. Then the Ugandan Army, commanded by Idi Amin, launched a successful attack on the Kabaka's palace. A curfew was imposed. It was illegal to be out of the house in the evening.

For me the curfew was the perfect excuse: I stopped teaching and I got on with my novel. But there were rumors of massacres and widespread drunkenness. There were many fights; scores were being settled. The police were not a presence.



The curfew only confirmed Vidia's fears of African anarchy. He had kept in touch with me during this period by letter, and one day I received a note saying that as soon as it was over and law and order were restored he would return to Kampala for the final month of his professorship.

"May I use your spare room?" he asked.

I was just a young man in Africa, trying to make my life. He was one of the strangest men I had ever met, and absolutely the most difficult. He was almost unlovable. He was contradictory, he quizzed me incessantly, he challenged everything I said, he demanded attention, he could be petty, he uttered heresies about Africa, he fussed, he mocked, he made his innocent wife cry, he had impossible standards. But he was also brilliant, and passionate in his convictions, and to be with him, as a friend or fellow-writer, I had always to be at my best.

I said, "Of course."

WHEN he arrived, he complained. My kitchen was dirty. There were dishes in the sink, food left uncovered, some scuttling cockroaches on the floor.

"Sack Veronica," he said fiercely about my maid. "Sack her!"

I said I would speak to her. I hated anyone criticizing servants, especially Vidia, who didn't know her.

"At least have a row with her. It will keep her on her toes."

Pat had gone to London to put their house in order and prepare for his return. I spoke fondly of her.

"Marry a woman who can earn a few pence," Vidia said. "Then you can get on with your writing. Patsy has always worked. That's good, you know," he said. "Do you find African girls frightfully beautiful?"

"Some of them, yes. Very beautiful. Do you?"

He thought for a while. "No," he said. "But Derek Walcott is married to a woman of mixed race who is very beautiful. I could just imagine myself with her." He paused, and then he made his disgusted face and said, "The narrator of my novel goes to prostitutes."

He had a way of letting his narrator stand for him.

"Frequents prostitutes," he said, trying out the literary phrase. "Afterward you hate yourself for being a man."

That shocked me. Making love to a woman did not have that effect on me at all. Afterward, I was calm, happy, tired, at rest, the opposite of disgusted.

"Your novel," I asked him. "Is it a sort of political memoir?"

"Not exactly. I had to find a form for it. It was terribly difficult. When I started out, I found it so hard to write I got sick," he said. "I couldn't perform the physical labor. It exhausted me."

I knew better than to tell him that although I found writing difficult, I did not suffer—I sat, I wrote, the words came. He distrusted writing that was so fluent. "When it comes easily, throw it away. It can't be any good," he said. There had to be an element of struggle in all writing.

For me, everything else was a struggle. I had just turned twenty-five. Almost all of my writing had been for African publications—of which there were many. I ached to have a publisher for my novel.

"Don't worry," he said. "The most important thing is to avoid making an enormous amount of money before you're forty. Concentrate on your writing."

He was thirty-four. He seemed older than my father. I needed him because he saw something in me I did not see. He said I was a writer.

When he left on the plane from Entebbe I drove back to town feeling lonely. I liked the place less. Africa had once seemed limitless and powerful and liberating, but Vidia had left me with doubts. He had belittled the politicians, ridiculed the currency, sneered at the newspapers. Africa now seemed tiny, self-destructive, and confining. It was full of crooked opportunists and it was dangerous. It was ruinous and random.

A note of comedy crept into my writing. It was an effect of my loneliness, and it startled me, but it gave me vitality. And it seemed more authentic than the solemnity it had displaced. I began to understand that much of what happened in Africa was not tragedy but farce. I had begun to see it with his eyes.

SIR VIDIA'S SHADOW

It was the hot English summer of 1977. Vidia was phoning from his London flat. "Are you free for a coffee after lunch? There is someone I want you to meet."

"Someone" meant a friend. Yes, of course, I wanted to meet my friend's friend.

In the years that had passed since we met in Uganda, I had become a writer. I had published a dozen books, including a critical study of Naipaul's work. I had also written "The Great Railway Bazaar," a story of a journey by train from London to Japan, which became an instant best-seller and freed me from worry about money.

When Vidia arrived at the café, a smiling woman was with him. She was slim, about my age, thirty-six or so, and wore a fluttery light dress. She had some of Pat's features, the paleness, the pretty lips, the full breasts—a Pat of ten years before, but far more confident. She was from Buenos Aires.

"Paul, this is Margaret."

"I know all about you," she said. "I very much liked the piece you wrote about Vidia in the *Telegraph*."

It was a portrait. I had thought: I will do what Vidia would do, write the truth, be impartial, let the peculiarities speak for themselves. Some people had come to like him on the basis of the piece, others had said they found him insufferable on the same evidence.

"I recognized him in it," she said.

I met Margaret again, unexpectedly, about a year and a half later, in New York. It was the snowiest day I had ever known, so snowy that the city had shut down. It was brimming with drifts, no cars, only people in the deep white street. Pat was in London; Vidia was teaching creative writing at Wesleyan. He made it from the snowdrifts of Middletown to Manhattan at the appointed time, six o'clock.

"Let's try the Oyster Bar, shall we?" he said with a note of insistence.

We left my hotel and walked the fifteen blocks to Grand Central Station in silence. After all these years I never took this friendship for granted. More than anything, I was inspired by the dignity of his struggle. I was thirty-seven, he was forty-six, we were both working hard. I was writing a play and contemplating a trip to South America, and he was teaching, though he had said, "Never be a teacher." There could be only one reason: he needed the money. Twelve years before, I had been the teacher and he the writer. Our positions had been reversed so dramatically that I had to be careful not to wound his dignity by mentioning it.

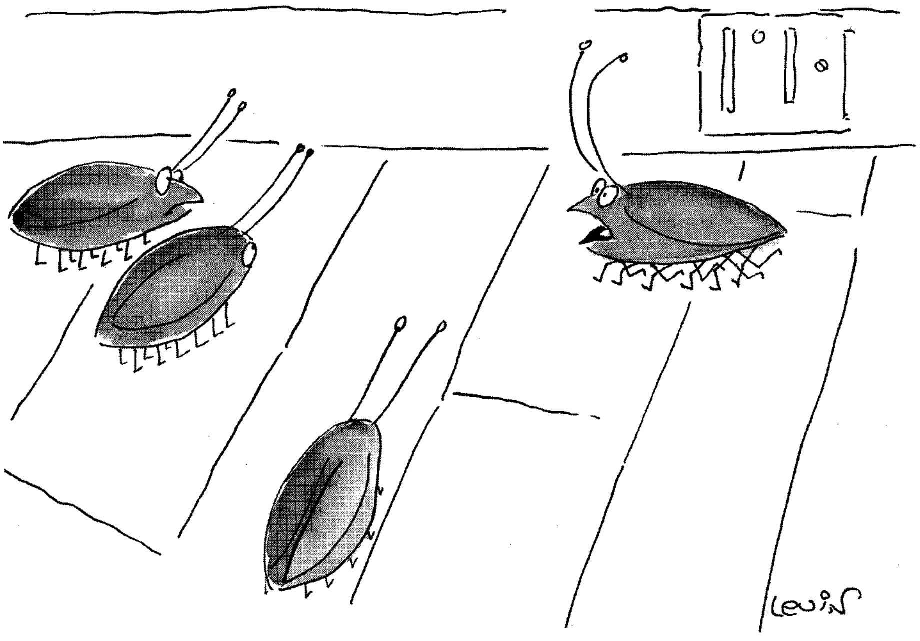
We ordered. We talked. We drank. We ate. Vidia kept returning to the subject of Wesleyan. It was corrupt, a con, a cheat, the soft option of writing courses, the laziness of students.

"It's crummy, man. Crummy. I should never have come."

"Why did you?"

"I believed they were doing some good. And the pence, of course." He made his rueful face. "But, you see, I have only myself to blame. I broke one of my rules."

From time to time he looked behind me, at a table where people were speaking



"Run for your lives! The Lord of the Dance is coming."

excitedly. I thought he might go over and tell them to shut up or stop smoking. But he was considerate: just a glance and then we kept talking.

"Excuse me," he said finally, and went to the table behind me while I held my breath and prayed that he would not make a scene. When I looked around, I saw him sitting down, sharing a bottle of wine. One of the people at the table was Margaret.

She smiled and raised her glass. She looked a bit tipsy and rumpled, but pretty as ever. I got up to speak to her.

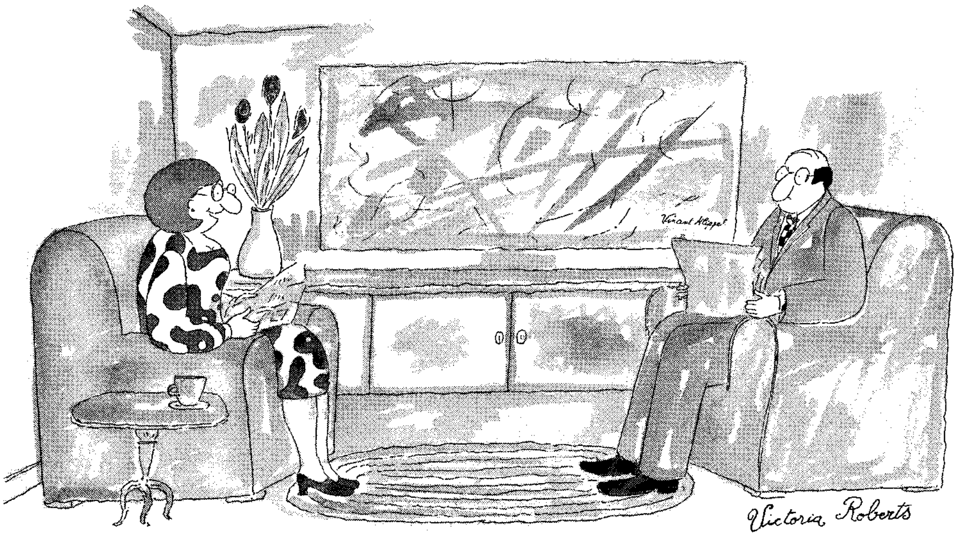
"How about this snow?" I said.

"Vidia adores it, but it makes life impossible," Margaret said. "We live so far away in Connecticut."

"If I had known you were here, I would have asked you to join us."

"Vidia wanted to talk to you. You're his friend. You never quarrel!"

"That's us. *Dos amigos.*"



"We never close, do we, Howard?"

• •

EVERY fall, around the time that the Nobel Prize was announced, Vidia was named in speculative articles as the likely recipient. He never mentioned the prize. On the contrary, he seemed to make a point of ignoring it. In 1973, when Patrick White won, I told Vidia I was pleased—I liked White's fiction.

Vidia said, "I've read him. I don't think there's much there."

Three years later, Saul Bellow won. Vidia claimed he had never read him. And he laughed when William Golding won, in 1983. "Tell me, what did Golding do to win it?" The Nigerian writer Wole Soyinka won in 1986.

"The Nobel committee is doing it again," he said. "Pissing from a great height. On books."

At some point in these late middle years, when Vidia was working on a book, hiding and making himself ill from hunching over it, he would interrupt his description of what he was writing to say, "It's major."

Was he satirizing himself? No one I had ever met was so devoted to the act of writing. But the lightness of his early books was gone, and much of their humor. His writing now was denser, plainer, devoid of ornamentation. It had acquired a wintry stoicism; a lushness had been lost, but he had never trusted lushness. "I wish my prose to be very transparent," he said once. There was always a lesson for me. "Make the reader see."

"I would like you to look at my new book," Vidia said in 1979. "It's major." It was "A Bend in the River." I found myself reading the typescript quickly, finding little to comment on. It was a good book. It contained both the somnolence and the random violence of Africa, and Vidia's nose anatomized the stinks and putrefaction of imperial failure. It was also a love story. His Muslim hero, Salim, has an affair with Yvette, the wife of an expatriate. Salim is a very prickly fellow. One day he feels slighted by Yvette, so he kicks her. She cries. Moments later she gets into bed, inviting him to join her. He realizes that it is the end of their affair, and one expects that he will make love to her. He holds her legs apart. What Salim does next made me swing the typescript away from my face: "I spat on her between the legs until I had no more spit." Yvette objects; she struggles. So Salim hits her again. "Bone struck against bone again; my hand ached at every blow."

The difficulty I had always had with Vidia's scenes of sex or violence became almost overwhelming. They were aggressive, strange, joyless. Women's bodies were pathetic and frail; they smelled. Disgust and desire mingled with a distinct hostility. The spitting scene stayed in my mind.

"A Bend in the River" was shortlisted for the Booker Prize that year. I was one of the judges, but when it came to the decision I voted against it. I preferred Patrick White's novel "The Twyborn Affair." Mine was the deciding vote.

VIDIA'S joke was that he would one day Anglicize his name, from Naipaul to Nye-Powell, and stride around Kensington wearing a floppy tweed hat and Norfolk jacket. "V. S. Nye-Powell," he'd repeat, as though announcing a distinguished guest. He also said, "People who see one as a little brown Englishman are making the biggest mistake of all. One reads it. One hears it. One is appalled."

But what was he? Loathing self-definition, and especially hating the description "West Indian writer," he wished to be appreciated for his gifts—who doesn't?—but as an ethnic Indian it was his fate to be one out of many (the title of one of his stories). Vidia on a London street was less likely a Nobel Prize candidate than a shopkeeper.

Then suddenly, in 1990, at age fifty-seven, Vidia was knighted, and Pat made a lady by association. Such gongs in England were mostly granted to older people. And it was especially rare to find a writer's name on the Honours List: writers were suspect, had no allies in the government, and were notorious carpers.

When she knighted Vidia at Buckingham Palace, the Queen bobbled her notes and said vaguely, "Naipaul. You're in books."

"Yes, Your Majesty," Vidia said, bow-ing deeply. He was now Sir Vidiadhar Surajprasad Naipaul. But, after some experimentation, he settled on Sir Vidia.

I suddenly understood the role I had played from my earliest days with Vidia. I saw that he had always been a knight and I had always been his squire—driver, sidekick, spear-carrier, flunky, gofer; diligent, tactful, helpful—delicately finessing the occasional intervention. I had never contradicted him; we had never quarrelled. Because he was not the perfect knight, I had to be the perfect squire, Sir Vidia's Shadow.

SIX years later, when Vidia returned from a journey to Malaysia, Indonesia, Iran, and Pakistan which would result in his book "Beyond Belief," he was devastated by what he found. Pat was on her deathbed. She had been frail almost from the time I'd first met her. More recently, insomnia had taken hold of her like a virus. Her hair had gone totally white. In her fifties she had become a little old lady.

"I cannot endure the knowledge that in another room of this house she is suffering without any hope of relief, except the very final one," Vidia wrote.

Pat had lived as a captive wife, but was stronger than most people guessed. More than anyone else, she had had the darkest experience of Vidia. Even if she had not known about his prostitutes, she had been painfully aware of his affair with Margaret. But she had loved him without condition and had always delighted in his success.

A death watch began, and Vidia wrote again soon after: "Now just five days on, her brain has gone. It can focus on only the most immediate thing." Though she was almost a corpse, she seemed to Vidia youthful—there was still a brightness in her face. He was remorseful. He said, "I took her too much for granted. I am surprised [by] my own grief—even while she is silent and alive in her room."

He asked me to write her obituary, in the form of a reminiscence. A few days later she died, and my obituary appeared in the *Daily Telegraph.* "In the many books that V. S. Naipaul has published," it read,

> Pat Naipaul is mentioned only once, and obliquely (the prologue to "An Area of Darkness," where she is referred to as "my companion"). But her intelligence, her encouragement, her love, and her discernment are behind every book that Naipaul has written. . . . She was tough-minded and she was tender. . . . As the first reader, highly intelligent, strong-willed, and profoundly moral, Pat played an active part in Vidia's work. She understood that a writer needs a loyal opposition as much as praise. She enjoyed intellectual combat and used to say, when Vidia and I were engaged on a topic, "I love to see you two sparring." . . . I loved her for her sweetness and her unselfishness, for the way she prized great writing and fine weather and kind people. . . .

Two months after she died, Vidia married again. He had fallen in love. The new Lady Naipaul was Nadira Khannum Alvi, the daughter of two transplanted Pakistanis in Kenya. She was a divorcée, more than twenty years younger than Vidia, and the author of a weekly column, titled "Letter from Bahawalpur," which appeared in a newspaper in Lahore, Pakistan.

Vidia had met her at a dinner party at the home of the American consul-general in Lahore, in October, 1995. The wedding was on April 15, 1996. I was not invited.

I read about it in the *Daily Telegraph,* which published an account by a reporter, Amit Roy, of the wedding lunch in London. "Do you know about Nadira, her reputation and her work?" Vidia had said to the man from the *Telegraph.* "She is very famous." He sounded happy. It did not surprise me that I hadn't been invited to the wedding. I was in Hawaii, half a world away, and I had still not got over Pat's death or the sad news that there had been only a handful of people at her funeral.

A MONTH later, I got a call inviting me to Hay-on-Wye, a well-known literary festival held in a pretty part of the Welsh border country.

"We want you and Vidia to appear," I was told. "Do a sort of literary dialogue." I agreed and was enlisted to help persuade Vidia to participate.

A deep-voiced woman answered the telephone when I called him.

"And who is speaking?" she asked.

I told her my name.

As she passed the phone to Vidia, I heard her say, "It's Paul Theroux. I want to meet him." Vidia agreed to come.

On June 1, 1996, a taxi met me at Newport. The driver, a former teacher and a Welsh speaker, took me to Abergavenny and across the Black Mountains, past jumbled villages. I dropped my bag at the innlike hotel and went to the festival. Vidia and Nadira had arrived that morning.

"Paul, this is Nadira."

She was dark and tall—taller than Vidia—and watchful, with the sort of frank, sizing-you-up stare that is rarely seen on the faces of Pakistani women.

We took our seats on a stage in the big circus tent. The audience was large, but the atmosphere was like that of a dog show. Vidia looked meditative. I felt sure that he hated doing this.

I was asked by the moderator what I had gained from my relationship with him.

"I feel that he gave me everything," I replied. "Vidia was the first writer I met who had a total sense of mission, an uncompromising attitude toward himself, toward the novel. He asked me once or twice, 'Are you sure you're up for it? Are you sure you want to live this terrible life?' I said, 'I'm up for it.' "

Vidia was sitting near enough for me to hear him sighing in impatience. He was not looking at me or at the audience. His body said bluntly that he wished he were elsewhere.

I turned to him. "You once wrote, 'To be a victim is to be absurd.' Do you still feel the same way?"

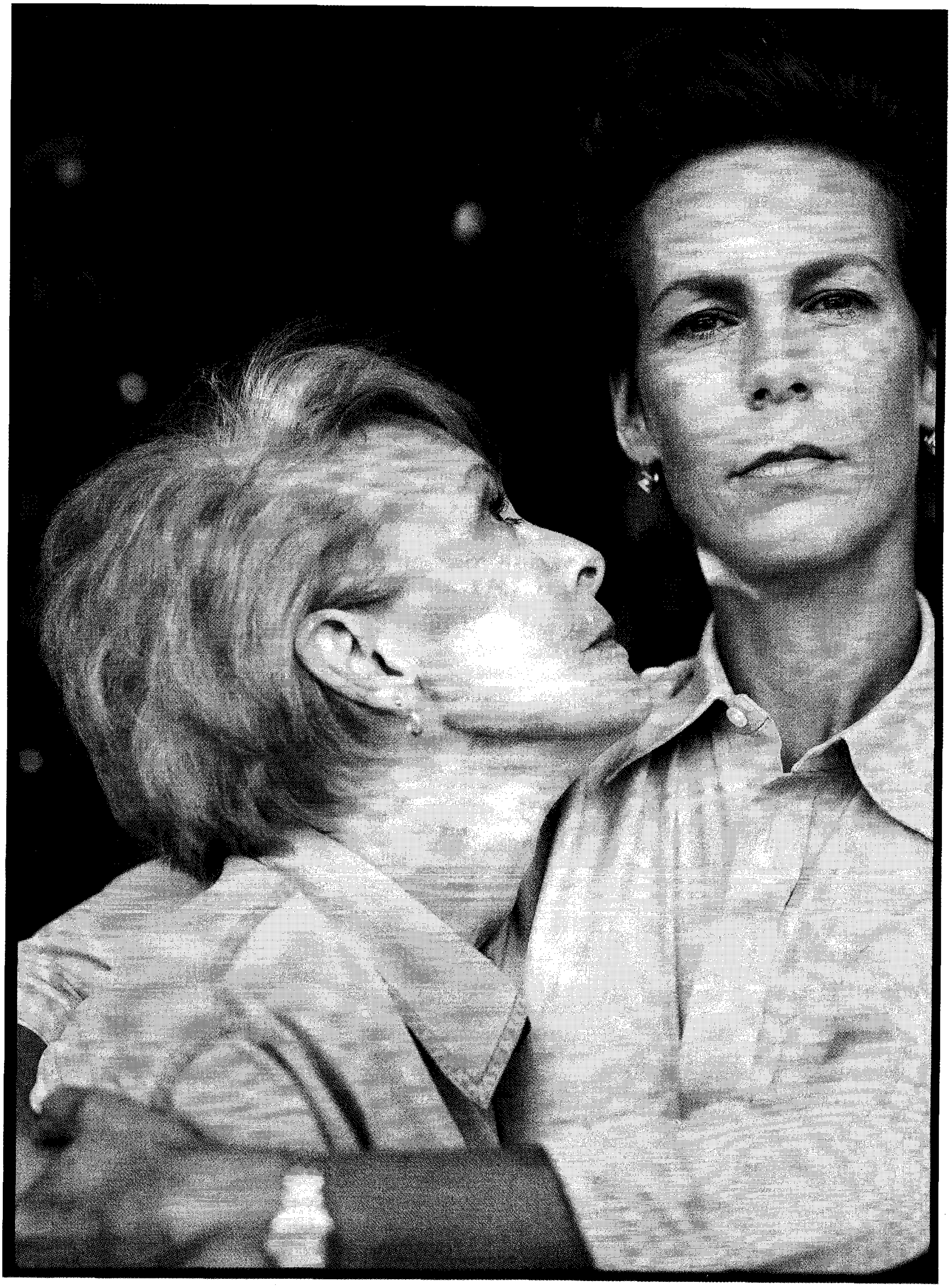
He cleared his throat and said, "I was thinking about people who are utterly helpless politically and have no rights, no

---

SCREAM TEAM

Janet Leigh, who changed the rules of Hollywood horror in 1960, when she stepped into Hitchcock's shower in "Psycho," and her daughter Jamie Lee Curtis, who eighteen years later changed them again, in John Carpenter's seminal slasher movie "Halloween," appear briefly together in a new installment of the "Halloween" series, opening next week. (Curtis stars; Leigh has a cameo.) While the iron-jawed Jamie Lee will likely bring in big box-office numbers, her mother may have her own critical mass moment, thanks to renewed interest in the sixties classic "The Manchurian Candidate" (she played Sinatra's loopy girlfriend), Gus Van Sant's upcoming remake of "Psycho" ("Oh why, Mother, why?"), and her witty performance in Walter Murch's re-edited rerelease of Orson Welles' fabulously perverse "Touch of Evil."

Photograph by Max Vadukul



"Mike, I have to level with you. I said I liked Disney World, but actually I didn't."

one to turn to, and I thought, They are always absurd. This was in a note to a study of slavery and revolution that I spent some years working on. The slaves had no rights—I am thinking about Caribbean slavery—and to be a victim is to be absurd. Slaves are absurd people. That is the truth. The current use of the word is an extension of that."

"So you don't mean it in the modern sense?" I said.

"No, not in the sense of someone in a university who can't get a job," Vidia said with the snappish energy he had when he was irritable. "That's another kind of victim."

People in the audience laughed at his seeming to mock universities, and over their laughter I persisted, hoping to draw him out.

Vidia looked at nothing, and said, "I deal with material at hand and I don't make generalizations like this."

I had been rebuffed. I said no more and let the silence descend.

Vidia giggled confidently. "Sorry, I don't want to stump the conversation."

The moderator rescued the faltering moment, and asked about the effect that living in Britain had had on our writing. I gestured for Vidia to answer.

"This is a very important question," he said. "In the nineteen-fifties, if you were writing in English, there was only one place where you could be a writer. It was here. But to write always as an exotic is a very awful thing to have to do, because you seldom have people who can share your experience. I am always aware of writing in a vacuum, almost always for myself. I was always writing for people who were indifferent to my material."

"Why could you not return to Trinidad?" the moderator asked.

"You cannot beat books out on a drum!" Vidia cried. "It's as simple as that. What would I have done? I mean, enter into it imaginatively—that question. Who would have published your books? Who would have read them? Who would have reviewed them? Who would have bought them? Who would have paid you for the effort? It's not a question."

"When," I asked, "did you develop the sense of people reading your work?"

"I don't have that sense at all. I've seldom met people who have," he said, and there was more laughter. "I've met an awful lot of people who come and bluff their way through interviews with me."

I had, it was obvious, assumed the position of interviewer. I had a vibration—yes, a vibration—that he objected to sharing the stage.

"You said once that writing 'A House for Mr. Biswas' was your Eden," I said. "What did you mean?"

Vidia frowned and said, "Well, great anxiety. Great poverty. Extraordinarily squalid conditions in London, especially for people like myself. Very hard to get accommodation."

The audience became attentive at hearing Vidia refer personally, even if only implicitly, to British racism.

"Miraculously, in 1958 I found a lady in Streatham Hill who let me have the top part of her house," he said. "She worked all day, so I had the house to myself. This was a wonderful experience for me. I was extremely happy. And it was an Eden because there was a kind of innocence about the purity of that dedication."

I continued. "You once said that you were disappointed at Oxford. How would you fare at a university these days?"

"I think they're calamitous, these English courses," Vidia said angrily. He shifted in his chair, looking combative. "They're actively destructive of civilization and thought. When I was at Oxford in 1950, I think we all knew that English was not a serious subject for study, not worth a serious degree, not worth a physics degree. Now what has happened is that this *non*-subject has been taken over by very politically motivated people. Universities have become places where free thinking is not allowed. Nowadays people read very, very little and they have elaborate theories. This has particularly damaged the newer countries, the lesser cultures, who at great cost have produced intellectuals. They send them to Oxford, Cambridge, they send them to American universities, and they come back parroting dreadful political tripe. They're corrupt!"

The response, as his voice broke on the word "corrupt," was tumultuous applause from every side of the tent.

"I think literature should be read privately," Vidia added. "Literature is not for the young. Literature is for the old, the experienced, the wounded, the damaged, who read literature to find echoes of their own experience and balm of a certain sort. Contented tribal societies don't need literature. They pound their yams and they're quite happy."

The dialogue was over. As we were led out I said, "Are you staying at the hotel, Vidia?"

"I'm not staying," he said. He looked pained.

"It seems quite a nice hotel," I said. "We could have dinner later."

"I get so lonely in hotel rooms."

He spotted Nadira and motioned to her. "We'll talk," he said.

A YEAR later, I received a catalogue from a bookseller who specialized in modern first editions. The following item caught my attention:

> #336 THEROUX, Paul. "Fong and the Indians." Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1968. His second book . . . This copy is inscribed by Theroux to writer V. S. Naipaul: "For Vidia / & Pat / with love / Paul." Near fine in a very good dust jacket . . . $1500.

There were several more of my books on the list. The prices were extortionate. What had Vidia done? To twit him, I faxed him the pages, and asked, "How are you?"

The reply came from Nadira. It was one of the strangest messages I've ever received, printed in big block letters like a child's school essay. I watched, squinnying at it, as it scrolled out of my fax machine.

She began with the startling assertion that I would not be writing her obituary. The one I had written of Pat Naipaul was a poor job, she said. It belonged in the realm of fiction and was more about me than about "poor Pat." This from the woman who had been with Vidia in Lahore as his unlucky wife lay dying in Wiltshire?

If my writing the obituary had been a favor, Nadira went on, the favor was reciprocated by Vidia's agreeing to appear at the Hay-on-Wye festival. She then rubbished the event and accused me of trying to make Vidia seem fanatical and extreme. I should be, she concluded, a more responsible friend.

The more I reflected, the more I became convinced that Vidia had not seen the fax. He was scrupulous in matters of punctuation. Poor grammar set his teeth on edge. He was put off by the slightest gaucheries.

I faxed him: "I have just received the attached from your wife. I will reply to her, but am puzzled about it and wonder what could possibly have motivated her to write to me in this way." But there was no reply.

He was my friend. He had been my friend for more than thirty years. But from the beginning I had been a bit afraid of him. It is impossible to see a friend lose his temper and not imagine that same fury turned on you. I had admired his talent. And after a while I admired nothing else.

IF a person wishes to vanish from your life, there is really no miracle you can work to get him back. I tried to put the matter out of my mind. Hong Kong was passing from the British into the hands of China, and my new novel, a black comedy about the handover, was about to be published. I had agreed to a one-week book tour in England's reliable spring.

I arrived early on an April morning of mist and sun. I was now a man of fifty-five, a resident of Hawaii, a part-time beekeeper.

I went to my hotel, and around noon my son, Marcel, arrived. He had just finished writing a novel of his own. He was nervous and proud, but not prouder than I was of him.

"Is there anything wrong, Dad?"

I had been telling myself I was happy, yet he knew there was a shadow.

"Naipaul," I said.

I told him about Nadira's letter of a month before.

He said, "No way!"

I told him the rest.

"Vidia would have stopped her if he had known. All that shit about my obituary of Pat."

"Maybe he does know."

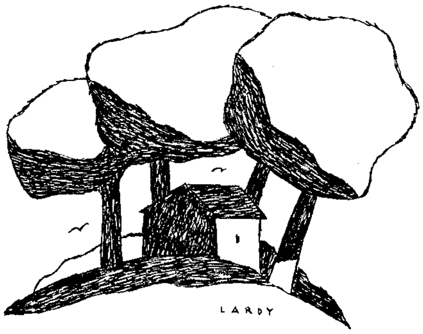
I said, "He doesn't know."

"You're obsessing, Dad."

"But I will never know for sure."

Marcel made an abrupt snoring sound. I knew that this conversation was beginning to bore him, but I was grateful I had a listener.

We left the hotel, and all the way down Gloucester Road I continued ranting, turning from time to time to say, "Know what I mean? More than thirty years! It's a friendship."



"You could ring him."

"Vidia doesn't answer the phone."

"Write him a letter."

"I did that. If I do it again I'll look pathetic. If only he—"

We had come to the crooked and perilous part of Gloucester Road where all the accidents happen, the dogleg that makes an almost blind curve. On the word "he," Vidia had appeared, his face fixed and stony, walking fast toward me. All my talk seemed to have babbled him into being. He was thirty feet away. He hadn't yet seen me.

He had to be a vaporous apparition. But he was solid enough. He was thrashing the pavement with a walking stick. In a city of seven million, our paths had miraculously crossed.

"Vidia?"

"Paul?"

"Where are you going?" I asked.

"I just had my lunch. I'm taking a little walk in the park."

As he spoke he started to move forward again. To detain him I said, "How is your book going?"

"One more month, one more month." He took a breath. "It has been a tremendous labor."

I was hot, I was nervous. I stammered, "Vidia, did you get a fax from me?"

"Yes. Now I must go. My walk."

"Do we have something to discuss?"

"No." He was moving crabwise, crouching a bit.

"What do we do, then?"

His mouth twisted down. It was the look of helpless suffering he wore the very first time I saw him, in Uganda.

"Take it on the chin and move on," he said. He was off.

Vidia was very small, and shrinking fast—so tiny, indeed, he cast no shadow, on this bright day in April. Without a shadow he seemed even smaller than he was, and darker, as though he had no substance. As though he *were* the shadow.

Take it on the chin and move on. It was, as always, great advice.

I was dazed. I felt liberated. He had made me his by choosing me; his rejection of me meant I was on my own. He had freed me, he had opened my eyes, he had given me a subject. ♦

FICTION

COMMUNIST

BY PHILIP ROTH

Ringold's older brother, Murray, was my first high-school English teacher, and it was through him that I hooked up with Ira. In 1946 Murray was just back from the Army, where he'd served with the 17th Airborne Division at the Battle of the Bulge; in March, 1945, he'd made the famous jump across the Rhine which signalled the beginning of the end of the European war. He was, in those days, a crusty, brash, bald-headed guy, not as tall as Ira but rangy and athletic, who hovered over our heads in a perpetual state of awareness. He was altogether natural in his manner and posture while in his speech verbally copious and intellectually almost menacing. His passion was to explain, to clarify, to make us understand, with the result that every last subject we talked about he broke down into its principal elements no less meticulously than he diagrammed sentences on the blackboard. His special talent was for dramatizing inquiry, for casting a strong narrative spell even when he was being strictly analytic and scrutinizing aloud, in his clear-cut way, what we read and wrote.

Along with the brawn and the conspicuous braininess, Mr. Ringold brought with him into the classroom a charge of visceral spontaneity that was a revelation to tamed, respectabilized kids who were yet to comprehend that obeying a teacher's rules of decorum had nothing to do with mental development. There was more importance than perhaps even he imagined in his winning predilection for heaving a blackboard eraser in your direction when the answer you gave didn't hit the mark. Or maybe there wasn't. Maybe Mr. Ringold knew very well that what boys like me needed to learn was not only how to express themselves with precision and acquire a more discerning response to words but how to be rambunctious without being stupid, how not to be too well concealed or too well behaved, how to begin to release the masculine intensities from the institutional rectitude that intimidated the bright kids the most.

You felt, in the sexual sense, the power of a male high-school teacher like Murray Ringold—masculine authority uncorrected by piety—and you felt, in the priestly sense, the vocation of a male high-school teacher like Murray Ringold, who wasn't lost in the amorphous American aspiration to make it big, who—unlike the school's women teachers—could have chosen to be almost anything else and chose instead, for his life's work, to be ours. All he wanted all day long was to deal with young people he could influence, and his biggest kick in life he got from their response.

Not that the impression his bold classroom style left on my sense of freedom was apparent at the time; no kid thought that way about school or teachers or himself. An incipient craving for social independence, however, had to have been nourished somewhat by Murray's example, and I told him this when, in July, 1997, for the first time since I graduated from high school, in 1950, I ran into Murray, now ninety years old but in every discernible way still the teacher whose task is realistically, without self-parody or inflating dramatics, to personify for his students the maverick dictum "I don't give a good God damn," to teach them that you don't have to be Al Capone to transgress—you just have to *think*. "In human society," Mr. Ringold taught us, "thinking's the greatest transgression of all." "Cri-ti-cal think-ing," Mr. Ringold said, using his knuckles to rap out each of the syllables on his desktop—"there is the ultimate subversion." I told Murray that hearing this early on from a manly guy like him—seeing it demonstrated by him—provided the most valuable clue to growing up that I had clutched at, albeit half comprehendingly, as a provincial, protected, high-minded high-school kid yearning to be rational and of consequence and free.

Murray, in turn, told me everything that, as a youngster, I didn't know and couldn't have known about his brother's private life, a grave misfortune replete with farce over which Murray would sometimes find himself brooding even though Ira was dead now more than thirty years. "Thousands and thousands of Americans destroyed in those years, political casualties, historical casualties, because of their beliefs," Murray said. "But I don't remember anybody else being brought down quite the way that Ira was. It wasn't on the great American battlefield he would himself have chosen for his destruction. Maybe, despite ideology, politics, and history, a genuine catastrophe is always personal bathos at the core. Life can't be impugned for any failure to trivialize people. You have to take your hat off to life for the techniques at its disposal to strip a man of his significance and empty him totally of his pride."

Murray also told me, when I asked, how he had been stripped of *his* significance. In '55, almost four years after Ira was blacklisted from radio for being a Communist, Murray had been dismissed from his teaching job by the Board of Education for refusing to coöperate with the House Un-American Activities Committee when it had come through Newark for four days of hearings. He was reinstated, but only after a six-year legal struggle that ended in a 4–3 decision by the state supreme court, reinstated with back pay, minus the amount of money he had earned supporting his family those six years as a vacuum salesman.

"When you don't know what else to do," Murray said with a smile, "you sell vacuum cleaners. Door to door. Kirby vacuum cleaners. You spill a full ashtray onto the carpet and then you vacuum it

FILIP PAGOWSKI

up for them. You vacuum the house for them. That's how you sell the thing. Vacuumed half the houses in New Jersey in my day. Look, I had a lot of well-wishers, Nathan. I had a wife whose medical expenses were constant, and we had a child, but I was getting a pretty good amount of business and I sold a lot of people vacuum cleaners. And despite her scoliosis problems, Doris went back to work. She went back to the lab at the hospital. Did the blood work. Eventually ran the lab. She used to come home from the Beth Israel, just across the street from us, and cook dinner in her lab coat. Ours was the only family I ever knew of whose salad dressing was served in laboratory flasks. The Erlenmeyer flask. We stirred our coffee with pipettes. All our glassware was from the lab. When we were on our uppers, Doris made ends meet. Together we were able to tackle it."

"And how did Ira take this happening to you?"

"Oh, it distressed him. I'd go as far as to say it ruined him had he not already been ruined by everything else. I was confident all along that I was going to win, and I told this to him. They had no legal reasons for firing me. He kept saying, 'You're kiddin' yourself. They don't need legal reasons.' He knew of too many guys who had been fired, period. Eventually I won, but he felt responsible for what I went through. He carried it around with him for the rest of his life. About you, too, you know. About what happened to you."

"Me?" I said. "Nothing happened to me. I was a kid."

"Oh, something happened to you."

Of course it should not be too surprising to find out that your life story has included an event, something important, that you have known nothing about—your life story is in and of itself something that you know very little about.

"If you remember," Murray said, "when you graduated from college you didn't get a Fulbright? That was because of my brother."

In 1953-54, my last year at Chicago, I'd applied for a Fulbright to do graduate work in literature at Oxford and been turned down. I had been near the top of my class, had enthusiastic recommendations, and, as I now remembered it—for the first time, probably, since it happened—was shocked not only at being turned down but because a Fulbright to study literature in England went to a fellow-student who was well below me in class standing.

"This true, Murray? I just thought it was screwy, unfair. The fickleness of fate. I didn't know what to think. I wuz robbed, I thought—and then I got drafted. How do you know this is so?"

"The agent told Ira. The F.B.I. He was on Ira for years. Stopping around to visit him. Coming around to try to get him to name names. Told him that's how he could clear himself. They had you down for Ira's nephew."

"His nephew? How come his nephew?"

"Don't ask me. The F.B.I. didn't always get everything right. Maybe they didn't always want to get everything right. The guy told Ira, 'You know your nephew who applied for a Fulbright? The kid in Chicago? Zuckerman? He didn't get it because of your being a Communist.' "

"You think that was true."

"No doubt about it."

All the while I was listening to Murray—and looking at the needle of a man he'd become and thinking of this physique as the materialization of all that coherence of his, as the consequence of a lifelong indifference to everything other than liberty in its most austere sense . . . thinking that Murray was an essentialist, that his character wasn't contingent, that wherever he'd found himself, even selling vacuum cleaners, he'd managed to find his dignity . . . thinking that Murray (whom I didn't love or have to; with whom there was just the contract, teacher and student) was Ira (whom I did love) in a more mental, sensible, matter-of-fact version, Ira with a practical, clear, well-defined social goal, Ira without the heroically exaggerated ambitions, without that passionate, overheated relationship to everything, Ira unblurred by impulse and the argument with everything—I had a picture in my mind of Murray's unclothed upper torso, still blessed (when he was already forty-one) with all the signs of youth and strength. The picture I had was of Murray Ringold as I had seen him late one Tuesday afternoon in the fall of 1948, leaning out the window and removing the screens from the second-floor apartment where he lived with his wife and daughter on Lehigh Avenue.

Across the street was the Beth Israel Hospital, where I knew Mrs. Ringold had worked as a lab assistant before their daughter was born, and around the corner was the Osborne Terrace branch library, where I used to bicycle for a weekly supply of books. The hospital, the library, and, as represented by my teacher, the school: the neighborhood's institutional nexus was all reassuringly present for me in virtually that one square block. Yes, the everyday workability of neighborhood life was in full swing on that afternoon in 1948 when I saw Mr. Ringold hanging out over the sill undoing a screen from the front window.

As I braked to descend the steep Lehigh Avenue hill, I watched him thread a rope through one of the screen's corner hooks and then, after calling down "Here she comes," lower it along the face of the two-and-a-half-story building to a man in the garden, who undid the rope and set the screen onto a pile stacked against the brick stoop. I was struck by the way Mr. Ringold performed an act that was both athletic and practical. To perform that act as gracefully as he did you had to be very strong.

When I got to the house I saw that the man in the garden was a giant wearing glasses. It was Ira. It was the brother who had come to our high school, to "Auditorium," to portray Abe Lincoln. He'd appeared on the stage in costume and, standing all alone, delivered Lincoln's Gettysburg Address and then the Second Inaugural, concluding with what Mr. Ringold, the orator's brother, later told us was as noble and beautiful a sentence as any American President, as any American *writer*, had ever written (a long, chugging locomotive of a sentence, its tail end a string of weighty cabooses, that he then made us diagram and analyze and discuss for an entire class period): "With malice toward none, with charity for all, with firmness in the right as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in, to bind up the nation's wounds, to care for him who shall have borne the battle and for his widow and his orphan, to do all which may achieve and cherish a just and a lasting peace among ourselves and with all nations." For the rest of the program, Abraham Lincoln removed his stovepipe hat and debated the pro-slavery senator Stephen A. Douglas, whose lines (the most insidiously anti-Negro of which a group of students—we members of an extracurricular discussion group called the Contemporary Club—loudly booed) were read by Murray Ringold, who had arranged for Iron Rinn to visit the school.

As if it weren't disorienting enough to

see Mr. Ringold out in public without a shirt and tie—without even an undershirt—Iron Rinn wasn’t wearing any more than a prizefighter. Shorts, sneakers, that was it. All but naked, not only the biggest man I’d ever seen up close but the most famous. Iron Rinn was heard on network radio every Thursday night on “The Free and the Brave”—a popular weekly dramatization of inspiring episodes out of American history—impersonating people like Nathan Hale and Orville Wright and Wild Bill Hickok and Jack London. In real life, he was married to Eve Frame, the leading lady of the weekly repertory playhouse for “serious” drama called “The American Radio Theatre.”

The Tuesday that I first met Ira was Tuesday, October 12, 1948. Had the World Series not just ended on Monday, I might, timorously, out of deference to my teacher’s privacy, have speeded on by the house and, without even waving or shouting hello, turned left at the corner onto Osborne Terrace. As it happened, however, the day before I had listened to the Indians beat the old Boston Braves in the final game of the Series from the floor of Mr. Ringold’s office. He had brought a radio with him that morning, and after school those whose families didn’t yet own a television set—the vast majority of us—were invited to spill directly out of his eighth-period English class and down the hall to crowd into the English department chairman’s little office to hear the game, which was already under way at Braves Field.

Courtesy, then, necessitated that I slow way, way down and call out to him, “Mr. Ringold—thanks for yesterday.” Courtesy necessitated that I nod and smile at the giant in his yard. And—with a dry mouth, stiffly—stop and introduce myself. And respond a little daffily when he startled me by saying, “How ya’ doin’, buddy,” by replying that on the afternoon he’d appeared at Auditorium I’d been one of the boys who had booed Stephen A. Douglas when he announced into Lincoln’s face, “I am opposed to Negro citizenship in any and every form. [Boo.] I believe this government was made on a white basis. [Boo.] I believe it was made for white men [Boo], for the benefit of white men [Boo], and their posterity forever. [Boo.] I am in favor of confining citizenship to white men . . . instead of conferring it upon Negroes, Indians, and other inferior races. [Boo. Boo. Boo.]”

DEVOTION

To carve this long-haired, melon-breasted girl,
His blade caressing every curve and curl
Of her slim hips and coiled, voluptuous tail,
Her lover had to slay, then flay, a whale.

—Daniel Hoffman

Something rooted deeper than mere courtesy (ambition, the ambition to be admired for my moral conviction) prompted me to find the nerve to break through the shyness and tell him, tell the trinity of Iras, all three of him—the patriot martyr of the podium Abraham Lincoln, the natural, hardy American of the airwaves Iron Rinn, and the redeemed roughneck from Newark’s First Ward Ira Ringold—that it was I who had instigated the booing.

Mr. Ringold came down the stairs from the second-floor flat, sweating heavily, wearing just khaki trousers and a pair of moccasins. Right behind him came Mrs. Ringold, who, before retreating back upstairs, set out a tray with a pitcher of ice water and three glasses. And so it was—4:30 P.M., October 12, 1948, a blazing-hot autumn day and the most astonishing afternoon of my young life—that I tipped my bike onto its side and sat on the steps of my English teacher’s stoop with Iron Rinn of “The Free and the Brave,” discussing a World Series in which Bob Feller had lost two games—unbelievable—and Larry Doby, the pioneering black player in the American League, whom we all admired, but not the way we admired Jackie Robinson, had gone seven for twenty-two.

Then we were talking about boxing: Louis knocking out Jersey Joe Walcott when Walcott was way ahead on points; Tony Zale regaining the middleweight title from Rocky Graziano right in Newark, at Ruppert Stadium in June, crushing him with a left in the third round, and then losing it to a Frenchman, Marcel Cerdan, over in Jersey City a couple of weeks back, in September. And then, from talking to me about Tony Zale one minute, Iron Rinn was talking to me about Winston Churchill the next, about a speech that Churchill had made a few days earlier that had him boiling, a speech advising the United States not to destroy its atomic-bomb reserve because the atomic bomb was all that prevented the Communists from dominating the world. He talked about Winston Churchill the way he talked about Leo Durocher and Marcel Cerdan. He called Churchill a reactionary bastard and a warmonger with no more hesitation than he called Durocher a loudmouth and Cerdan a bum. He talked about Churchill as though Churchill ran the gas station out on Lyons Avenue. It wasn’t how we talked about Winston Churchill in my house. It was closer to how we talked about Hitler. In his conversation, as in his brother’s, there was no invisible line of propriety observed and there were no conventional taboos. You could stir together anything and everything: sports, politics, history, literature, reckless opinionating, polemical quotation, idealistic sentiment, moral rectitude . . . There was something marvellously bracing about it, a different and dangerous world, demanding, straightforward, aggressive, freed from the need to please. And freed from school. Iron Rinn wasn’t just a radio star. He was somebody outside the classroom who was not afraid to say anything.

I had just finished reading about somebody else who wasn’t afraid to say anything—Thomas Paine—and the book I’d read, a historical novel by Howard Fast called “Citizen Tom Paine,” was one of the collection in my bicycle basket that I was returning to the library. While Ira was denouncing Churchill to me, Mr. Ringold had stepped over to where the books had tumbled from the basket onto the pavement at the foot of the stoop and was looking at their spines to see what I was reading. Half the books were about baseball and were by John R. Tunis, and the other half were about American history and were by Howard Fast. My idealism (and my idea of a man) was being constructed along parallel lines, one fed by novels about baseball champions who won their games the hard way, suffering adversity and humiliation and many defeats as they struggled toward victory, and the other by novels about heroic Americans who fought against tyranny and injustice, champions of liberty for America and for all mankind. Heroic suffering. That was my specialty.

"Citizen Tom Paine" was not so much a novel plotted in the familiar manner as a sustained linking of highly charged rhetorical flourishes tracing the contradictions of an unsavory man with a smoldering intellect and the purest social ideals, a writer *and* a revolutionary. "He was the most hated—and perhaps by a few the most loved—man in all the world." "A mind that burned itself as few minds in all human history." To "feel in his own soul the whip laid on the backs of millions." "His thoughts and ideas were closer to those of the average working man than Jefferson's ever could be." That was Paine as Fast portrayed him, savagely single-minded and unsociable, an epic, folkloric belligerent—unkempt, dirty, wearing a beggar's clothes; bearing a musket in the unruly streets of wartime Philadelphia, a bitter, caustic man, often drunk, frequenting brothels, hunted by assassins, and friendless. He did it all alone: "My only friend is the revolution." By the time I had finished the book, there seemed to me no way other than Paine's for a man to live and die if he was intent on demanding, in behalf of human freedom—demanding both from remote rulers and from the coarse mob—the transformation of society.

He did it all alone. There was nothing about Paine that could have been more appealing, however unsentimentally Fast depicted an isolation born of defiant independence and personal misery. For Paine had ended his days alone as well, old, sick, wretched, and alone, ostracized, betrayed—despised beyond everything for having written in his last testament, "The Age of Reason," "I do not believe in the creed professed by the Jewish church, by the Roman church, by the Greek church, by the Turkish church, by the Protestant church, nor by any church that I know of. My own mind is my own church." Reading about him had made me feel bold and angry, and, above all, free to fight for what I believed in.

"Citizen Tom Paine" was the very book that Mr. Ringold had picked out of my bicycle basket to bring back to where we were sitting.

"You know this one?" he asked his brother.

Iron Rinn took my library book in Abe Lincoln's enormous hands and began flipping through the opening pages. "Nope. Never read Fast," he said. "I should. Wonderful man. Guts. He was with Wallace from Day One. I catch his column whenever I buy the *Worker*, but I don't have the time for novels anymore. In Iran I did, in the service I read Steinbeck, Upton Sinclair, Jack London, Caldwell . . ."

"If you're going to read him, this is Fast at his best," Mr. Ringold said. "Am I right, Nathan?"

"This book is great," I answered.

"You ever read 'Common Sense'?" Iron Rinn asked me. "Ever read Paine's writings?"

"No," I said.

"Read 'em," Iron Rinn told me while still leafing through my book.

"There's a lot of Paine's writing quoted by Howard Fast," I said.

Looking up, Iron Rinn said, " 'The strength of the many is revolution, but curiously enough mankind has gone through several thousand years of slavery without realizing that fact.' "

"That's in the book," I said.

"I should hope so."

"You know what the genius of Paine was?" Mr. Ringold asked me. "It was the genius of all those men. Jefferson. Madison. Know what it was?"

"No," I said.

"You do know what it was," he said.

"To defy the English."

"A lot of people did that. No. It was to articulate the cause *in* English. The revolution was totally improvised, totally disorganized. Isn't that the sense you get from this book, Nathan? Well, these guys had to find a language for their revolution. To find the words for a great purpose."

"Paine said," I told Mr. Ringold, " 'I wrote a little book because I wanted men to see what they were shooting at.' "

"And that he did," Mr. Ringold said.

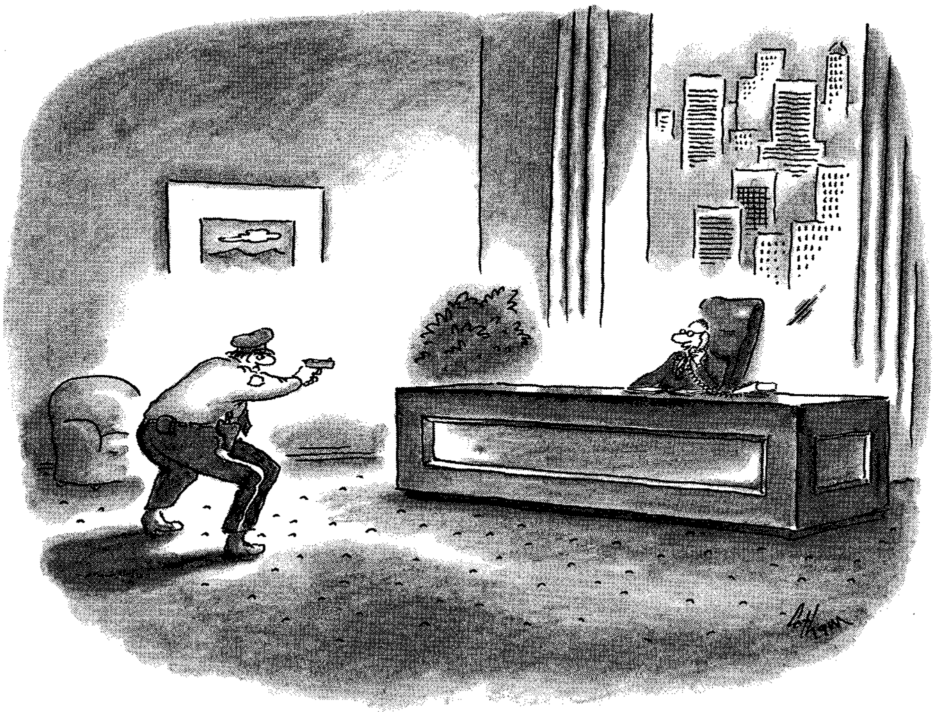
"Here," said Iron Rinn, pointing to some lines in the book. "On George III. Listen. 'I should suffer the misery of devils, were I to make a whore of my soul by swearing allegiance to one whose character is that of a sottish, stupid, stubborn, worthless, brutish man.' "

Both quotations from Paine that Iron Rinn had recited—employing his "The Free and the Brave" people-bound, in-the-rough voice—were among the dozen or so that I had myself written down and memorized.

"You like that line," Mr. Ringold said to me.

"Yes. I like 'a whore of my soul.' "

"Why?" he asked me. I was beginning to perspire profusely from the sun on my face, from the excitement of meeting Iron Rinn, and now from being on the spot, having to answer Mr. Ringold as though I were in class while I was sitting between two shirtless brothers well over six feet tall, two big, natural men exuding the sort of forceful, intelligent manliness



"Can I call you back? I've just been joined by a law-enforcement official."

to which I aspired. Men who could talk about baseball and boxing talking about books. And talking about books as though something were at stake in a book. Not opening up a book to worship it or to be elevated by it or to lose yourself to the world around you. No, boxing with the book.

"Because," I said, "you don't ordinarily think of your soul as a whore."

"What's he *mean*, 'a whore of my soul'?"

"Selling it," I replied. "Selling his soul."

"Right. Do you see how much stronger it is to write 'I should suffer the misery of devils, were I to make a *whore* of my soul' rather than 'were I to *sell* my soul'?"

"Yes, I do."

"Why is that stronger?"

"Because in 'whore' he personifies it."

"Yeah—what else?"

"Well, the word 'whore' . . . it's not a conventional word, you don't hear it in public. People don't go around writing 'whore' or, in public, saying 'whore.' "

"Why don't they?"

"Shame. Embarrassment. Propriety."

"Propriety. Good. Right. So this is audacious, then."

"Yes."

"And *that's* what you like about Paine, isn't it? His audacity?"

"I think so. Yes."

"And now you know *why* you like what you like. You're way ahead of the game, Nathan. And you know it because you looked at one word he used, just one word, and you thought about that word he used, and you asked yourself some questions about that word he used, until you saw right through that word, saw through it as through a magnifying glass, to one of the sources of this great writer's power. He is audacious. Thomas Paine is audacious. But is that enough? That is only a part of the formula. Audacity must have a purpose, otherwise it's cheap and facile and vulgar. Why is Thomas Paine audacious?"

"In behalf," I said, "of his convictions."

"Hey, that's my boy," Iron Rinn suddenly announced. "That's my boy who booed Mr. Douglas!"

So it was that I wound up five nights later as Iron Rinn's backstage guest at a rally held in downtown Newark, at the Mosque, the city's biggest theatre, for Henry Wallace, the Presidential candidate of the newly formed Progressive Party. Wallace had been in Roosevelt's Cabinet as Secretary of Agriculture for seven years before becoming his Vice-President during Roosevelt's third term. In '44 he'd been dropped from the ticket and replaced by Truman, in whose Cabinet he served briefly as Secretary of Commerce. In '46, the President fired Wallace for sounding off in favor of coöperation with Stalin and friendship with the Soviet Union at just the point when the Soviet Union had begun to be perceived by Truman and the Democrats not only as an ideological enemy but as a serious threat to peace whose expansion into Europe and elsewhere had to be contained by the West.

This division within the Democratic Party—between the anti-Soviet majority led by the President and the "progressive" Soviet sympathizers led by Wallace and opposed to the Truman Doctrine and the Marshall Plan—was reflected in the split within my own household between father and son. My father, who had admired Wallace when he was F.D.R.'s protégé, was against the Wallace candidacy for the reason Americans traditionally choose not to support third-party candidates—in this case, because it would draw the votes of the left wing of the Democratic Party away from Truman and make all but certain the election of Governor Thomas E. Dewey of New York, the Republican candidate. The Wallace people were talking about their party's polling some six or seven million votes, more than had ever gone to any American third party.

"Your man is only going to deny the Democrats the White House," my father told me. "And if we get the Republicans, that will mean the suffering in this country that it has always meant. You weren't around for Hoover and Harding and Coolidge. You don't know firsthand about the heartlessness of the Republican Party. You despise big business, Nathan? You despise what you and Henry Wallace call 'the Big Boys from Wall Street'? Well, you don't know what it is when the party of big business has its foot in the face of ordinary people. I do. I know poverty and I know hardship in ways you and your brother have been spared, thank God."

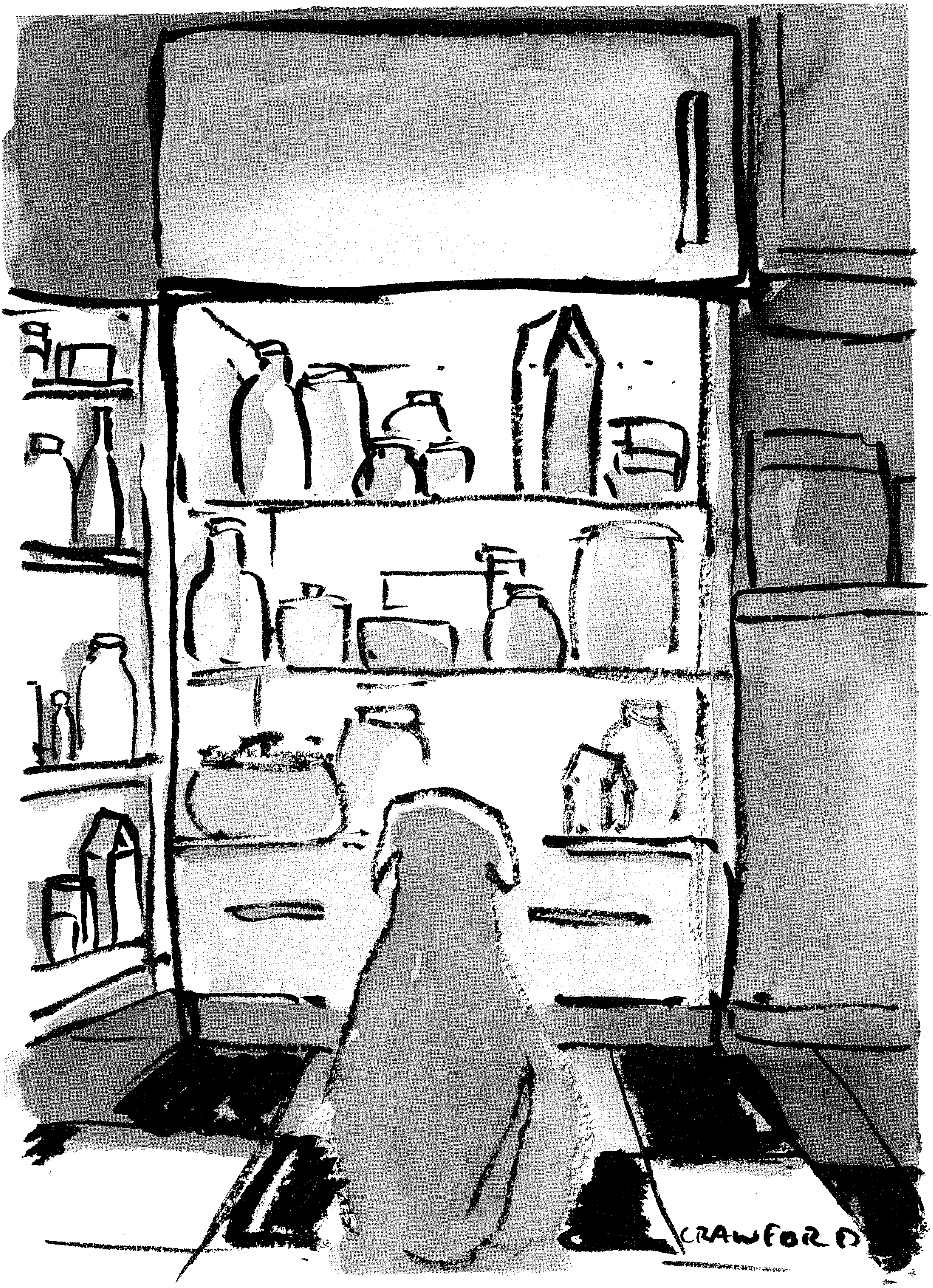
My father had been born in the Newark slums and become a chiropodist only by going to school at night while working by day on a bakery truck; and all his life, even after he had made a few bucks and we had moved into a house of our own, he continued to identify with the interests of what he called ordinary people and what I had taken to calling—along with Henry Wallace—"the common man." I was terrifically disappointed to hear my father flatly refuse to vote for the candidate who, as I tried to convince him, supported his own New Deal principles. Wallace wanted a national health program, protection for unions, benefits for workers; he was opposed to Taft-Hartley and the persecution of labor; he was opposed to the Mundt-Nixon bill and the persecution of political radicals. The Mundt-Nixon bill, if passed, would require the registration with the government of all Communists and "Communist-front" organizations. Wallace had said that Mundt-Nixon was the first step to a police state, an effort to frighten the American people into silence; he called it "the most subversive" bill ever introduced in Congress. The Progressive Party supported the freedom of ideas to compete in what Wallace called "the marketplace of thoughts." Most impressive to me was that, campaigning in the South, Wallace had refused to address any audience that was segregated—the first Presidential candidate ever to have that degree of courage and integrity.

"The Democrats," I told my father, "will never do anything to end segregation. They will never outlaw lynching and the poll tax and Jim Crow. They never have and they never will."

"I do not agree with you, Nathan," he told me. "You watch Harry Truman. Harry Truman has got a civil-rights plank in his platform, and you watch and see what he does now that he's rid of those Southern bigots."

Not only had Wallace bolted from the Democratic Party that year but so had the "bigots" my father spoke of, the Southern Democrats, who had formed their own party, the States' Rights Party—the "Dixiecrats." They were running for President Governor Strom Thurmond of South Carolina, a rabid segregationist. The Dixiecrats were also going to draw away votes, Southern votes, that routinely went to the Democratic Party, which was another reason Dewey was favored to defeat Truman in a landslide.

Every night over dinner in the kitchen, I did everything I could to persuade my father to vote for Henry Wallace and the


CRAWFORD

GRAND
CLEAVAGE
NATIONAL
PARK

"On the other hand, it may bring in more visitors."

restoration of the New Deal, and every night he tried to get me to understand the necessity for compromise in an election like this one. But as I had taken as my hero Thomas Paine, the most uncompromising patriot in American history, at the mere sound of the first *syllable* of the word "compromise" I jumped up from my chair and told him and my mother and my ten-year-old brother (who, whenever I got going, liked to repeat to me, in an exaggeratedly exasperated voice, "A vote for Wallace is a vote for *Dewey*") that I could never again eat at that table if my father was present.

One night at dinner my father tried another tack—to educate me further about the Republicans' contempt for every value of economic equality and political justice that I held dear—but I would have none of it: the two major political parties were equally without conscience when it came to the Negro's rights, equally indifferent to the injustices inherent in the capitalist system, equally blind to the catastrophic consequences for all of mankind of our country's deliberate provocation of the peace-loving Russian people. Close to tears, and meaning every word, I told my father, "I'm really surprised at you," as though it were he who was the uncompromising son.

But a greater surprise was coming. Late on Saturday afternoon he told me that he would rather I didn't go down to the Mosque that evening to attend the Wallace rally. If I still wanted to after we had spoken, he wouldn't try to stop me, but he at least wanted me to hear him out before I made my decision final. When I'd come home on Tuesday from the library and triumphantly announced at dinner that I had been invited to be a guest of Iron Rinn, the radio actor, at the Wallace rally downtown, I was obviously so thrilled at meeting Rinn, so beside myself with the personal interest he'd shown in me, that my mother had simply forbidden my father from raising his reservations about the rally. But now he wanted me to listen to what he felt he had a duty, as a parent, to discuss, and without my flying off the handle.

My father was taking me as seriously as the Ringolds were, but not with Ira's political fearlessness, with Murray's literary ingenuity, above all, with their seeming absence of concern for my decorum, for whether I would or would not be a good boy. The Ringolds were the one-two punch promising to initiate me into the big show, into my beginning to understand what it takes to be a man on the larger scale. The Ringolds compelled me to respond at a level of rigor that felt appropriate to who I now was. Be a good boy wasn't the issue with them. The sole issue was my convictions. But then their responsibility wasn't a father's, which is to steer his son away from the pitfalls. The father has to worry about the pitfalls in a way the teacher doesn't. He has to worry about his son's conduct, he has to worry about socializing his little Tom Paine. But once little Tom Paine has been let into the company of men and the father is still educating him as a boy, the father is finished. Sure, he's worrying about the pitfalls—if he wasn't, it would be wrong. But he's finished anyway. Little Tom Paine has no choice but to write him off, to betray the father and go boldly forth to step straight into life's very first pit. And then, all on his own—providing real unity to his existence—to step from pit to pit for the rest of his days, until the grave, which, if it has nothing else to recommend it, is at least the last pit into which one can fall.

"Hear me out," my father said, "and then you make up your own mind. I respect your independence, son. You want to wear a Wallace button to school? Wear it. It's a free country. But you have to have all the facts. You can't make an informed decision without facts."

Why had Mrs. Roosevelt, the great President's revered widow, withheld her endorsement and turned against Henry Wallace? Why had Harold Ickes, Roosevelt's trusted and loyal Secretary of the Interior, a great man in his own right, withheld his endorsement and turned against Henry Wallace? Why had the C.I.O., as ambitious a labor organization as this country had ever known, withdrawn its money and its support from Henry Wallace? Because of the Communist infiltration into the Wallace campaign. My father didn't want me to go to the rally because of the Communists, who had all but taken over the Progressive Party. He told me that Henry Wallace was either too naïve to know it or—what was, unfortunately, probably closer to the truth—too dishonest to admit it, but Communists, particularly from among Communist-dominated unions already expelled from the C.I.O.—

"Red-baiter!" I shouted, and I left the house. I took the No. 14 bus and went to the rally. I met Paul Robeson. He reached out to shake my hand after Ira introduced me as the kid at the high school he'd told him about. "Here he is, Paul, the boy who led the booing of Stephen A. Douglas." Paul Robeson, the Negro actor and singer, co-chairman of the Wallace for President Committee, who only a few months earlier at a Washington demonstration against the Mundt-Nixon bill had sung "Ol' Man River" to a crowd of five thousand protesters at the foot of the Washington Monument, who'd been fearless before the Senate Judiciary Committee, telling them (when asked at their hearings on Mundt-Nixon if he would comply with the bill if it was passed), "I would violate the law," then answering no less forthrightly (when asked what the Communist Party stood for), "For complete equality of the Negro people"—Paul Robeson took my hand in his and said, "Don't lose your courage, young man."

Standing backstage with the performers and speakers at the Mosque—enveloped simultaneously in two exotic new worlds, the leftist milieu and the world of "the wings"—was as thrilling as it would have been to sit down in the dugout with the players at a major-league game. From the wings I heard Ira do Abraham Lincoln again, this time tearing into not Stephen A. Douglas but the warmongers in both political parties: "Supporting reactionary regimes all over the world, arming Western Europe against Russia, militarizing America . . ." I saw Henry Wallace himself, stood no more than twenty feet away from him before he went onto the stage to address the crowd, and then stood almost at his side when Ira went up to whisper something to him at the gala reception after the rally. I stared at the Presidential candidate, a Republican farmer's son from Iowa as American-looking and American-sounding as any American I had ever seen, a politician against high prices, against big business, against segregation and discrimination, against appeasing dictators like Francisco Franco and Chiang Kai-shek, and I remembered what Fast had written of Paine: "His thoughts and ideas were closer to those of the average working man than Jefferson's ever could be." And in 1954—six years after that night at the Mosque when the candidate of the common man, the candidate of the people and the people's party, raised gooseflesh all over me by clenching his fist and crying out from the lectern, "We are in the midst of a fierce attack upon our freedom"—I got turned down for a Fulbright scholarship.

I did not and could not have made a scrap of difference, and yet the zealotry to defeat Communism reached even me.

IRON RINN had been born in Newark two decades before me, in 1913, a poor boy from a hard neighborhood—and from a cruel family—who briefly attended Barringer High, where he failed every subject but gym. He had bad eyesight and useless glasses and could barely read what was in the lesson books, let alone what the teacher wrote on the blackboard. He couldn't see and he couldn't learn and one day, as he explained it, "I just didn't wake up to go to school."

Murray and Ira's father was someone Ira refused even to discuss. In the months after the Wallace rally, the most Ira ever told me was this: "My father I couldn't talk to. He never paid the slightest bit of attention to his two sons. He didn't do this on purpose. It was the nature of the beast." Ira's mother, a beloved woman in his memory, died when he was seven, and her replacement he described as "the stepmother you hear about in the fairy tales. A real bitch." He quit high school after a year and a half and, a few weeks later, left the house forever at fifteen and found a job digging ditches in Newark. Till the war broke out, while the country was in the Depression, he drifted round and round, first in New Jersey and then all over America, taking whatever work he could get, mostly jobs requiring a strong back. Immediately after Pearl Harbor, he enlisted in the Army. He couldn't see the eye chart, but a long line of guys were waiting for the examination, and so Ira went around up close to the chart, memorized as much of it as he could, then got back in line, and that was how he passed the physical. When Ira came out of the Army, in 1945, he spent a year in Calumet City, Illinois, where he shared a room with the closest buddy he'd made in the service, a Communist steelworker, Johnny O'Day. They'd been soldier stevedores together on the docks in Iran, unloading lend-lease equipment that was shipped by rail through Teheran to the Soviet Union; because of Ira's strength on the job, O'Day had nicknamed his friend Iron Man Ira. In the evenings, O'Day had taught the Iron Man how to read a book and how to write a letter and given him an education in Marxism.

O'Day was a gray-haired guy some ten years older than Ira—"How he ever got into the service at his age," Ira said, "I still don't know." A six-footer skinny as a telephone pole but the toughest son of a bitch he'd ever met. O'Day carried in his gear a light punching bag that he used for his timing; so quick and strong was he that, "if forced to, he could lick two or three guys together." And O'Day was brilliant. "I knew nothing about politics. I knew nothing about political action," Ira said. "I didn't know one political philosophy or one social philosophy from another. But this guy talked a lot to me," he said. "He talked about the workingman. About things in general in the United States. The harm our government was doing to the workers. And he backed up what he said with facts. And a nonconformist? O'Day was so nonconformist that everything he did he did not do by the book. Yeah, O'Day did a lot for me, I know that."

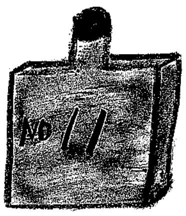
Like Ira, O'Day was unmarried. "Entangling alliances," he told Ira, "is something I don't want any part of at no time. I regard kids as hostages to the malevolent." Though he had but a year's education more than Ira, on his own O'Day had "skilled himself," as he put it, "in verbal and written polemics" by slavishly copying passage after passage out of all sorts of books and, with the aid of a grade-school grammar, analyzing the structure of the sentences. It was O'Day who gave Ira the pocket dictionary that Ira claimed remade his life. "I had a dictionary I read at night," Ira told me, "the way you would read a novel. I had somebody send me a Roget's Thesaurus. After unloading ships all day, I would work every night to improve my vocabulary."

He discovered reading. "One day—it must have been one of the worst mistakes the Army ever made—they sent us a complete library. What an error," he said, laughing. "I probably read every book they had in that library eventually. They built a quonset hut to house the books, and they made shelves, and they told the guys, 'You want a book, you come in here and get one.'" It was O'Day who told him—who still told him—which books to get.

Early on, Ira showed me three sheets of paper titled "Some Concrete Suggestions for Ringold's Utilization" which O'Day had prepared when they were in Iran together. "One: Always keep a dictionary at hand—a good one with plenty of antonyms and synonyms—even when you write a note to the milkman. And use it. Don't make wild passes at spelling and exact shades of meaning as you have been accustomed to doing. Two: Double-space everything you write in order to permit interpolation of afterthoughts and corrections. I don't give a damn if it does violate good usage insofar as personal correspondence is involved; it makes for accurate expression. Three: Don't run your thoughts together in a solid page of typing. Every time you treat a new thought or elaborate what you're already talking about, indent for a new paragraph. It may add up to jerkiness, but it will be much more readable. Four: Avoid clichés. Even if you have to drag it in by the tail, express something you've read or heard quoted in other than the original words. One of your sentences from the other night at the library session in point of demonstration: 'I stated briefly some of the ills of the present regime . . .' You've read that, Iron Man, and it isn't yours; it's somebody else's. It sounds as if it came out of a can. Suppose you expressed the same idea something like this: 'I build my argument about the effect of landed proprietorship and the dominance of foreign capital on what I have witnessed here in Iran.' "

There were twenty points in all, and the reason Ira showed them to me was to assist with *my* writing—with my journal, intended to be "political," where I was beginning to put down my "thoughts" when I remembered to. I'd begun keeping my journal in imitation of Ira, who'd begun keeping his in imitation of Johnny O'Day. The three of us used the same brand of notebook: a dime pad from Woolworth's, fifty-two lined pages about four inches by three inches, stitched at the top and bound between mottled brown cardboard covers.

When an O'Day letter mentioned a book, any book, Ira got a copy and so did I; I'd go right to the library and take it out. "I've been reading Bowers' 'Young Jefferson' recently," O'Day wrote, "along with other treatments of early-American history, and the Committees of Correspondence in that period were the principal agency by which the revolutionary-minded colonists developed their understanding and coördinated their plans." That's how I came to read "Young Jefferson" while in high school. O'Day wrote, "A couple of weeks ago I bought the twelfth edition of Bartlett's 'Quotations,' allegedly for my reference library, actually for the enjoyment I get from browsing," and so I went downtown to the main library, to sit among the reference books browsing in Bartlett the way I imagined O'Day did, my journal beside me, skimming each page for the wisdom that would expedite my maturing and make me somebody to reckon with. "I buy the *Cominform* (official organ published in Bucharest) regularly," O'Day wrote, but the *Cominform*—abbreviated name of the Communist Information Bureau—I knew I wouldn't find in any local library, and prudence cautioned me not to go looking.



I loved when Ira explained the workings of his own union, the United Electrical Workers, and described the people at the record factory where he'd worked. "It was a solid union, progressively led, controlled by the rank and file." *Rank and file*—three little words that thrilled me, as did the idea of hard work, tenacious courage, and a just cause to fuse the two. Of the hundred and fifty members on each shift, a hundred or so attended the biweekly shop meetings. Although most of the work is hourly paid, Ira told me, "There's no whip swinging at that factory. Y'understand? If a boss has something to tell you, he's courteous about it. Even for serious offenses, the offender's called into the office together with his steward. That makes a big difference."

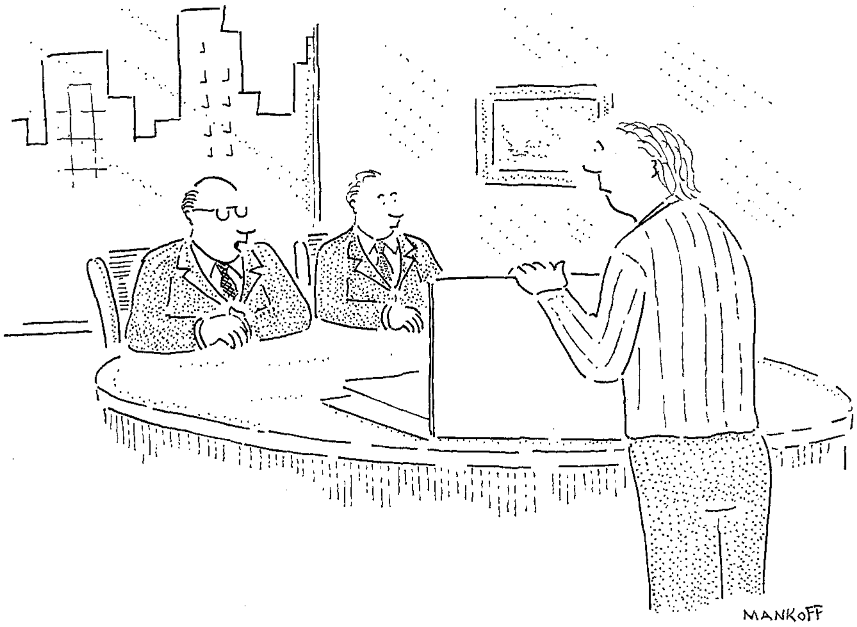
Ira would tell me all that transpired at an ordinary union meeting: "routine business like proposals for a new contract, the problem of absenteeism, a parking-lot beef, discussion of the looming war"—he meant war between the Soviet Union and the United States—"racism, the wages-causes-prices myth," going on and on not just because I was, at fifteen and sixteen, eager to learn all that a workingman did, how he talked and acted and thought, but because even after he cleared out of Calumet City to go to New York to work in radio and was solidly established as Iron Rinn on "The Free and the Brave," Ira continued to speak of the record plant and the union meetings in the charismatic tongue of his fellow-workers, talked as though he still went off to work there every morning. Every night, rather, for after a short while he had got himself put on the night shift so that he could have his days for "missionary work," by which, I eventually learned, he meant proselytizing for the Communist Party.

O'Day had recruited Ira into the Party when they were on the docks in Iran. Just as I, anything but orphaned, was the perfect target for Ira's tutorials, the orphaned Ira had been the perfect target for O'Day's.

It was for his union's Washington-Lincoln birthday fund-raiser his first February out in Chicago that somebody got the idea of turning Ira, a wiry man, knobbily jointed, with dark, coarse Indian-like hair and a floppy, big-footed gait, into Abe Lincoln: put whiskers on him, decked him out in a stovepipe hat, high-button shoes, and an old-fashioned, ill-fitting black suit, and sent him up to the lectern to read from the Lincoln-Douglas debates one of Lincoln's most telling condemnations of slavery. He got such a big hand for giving to the word "slavery" a strong working-class, political slant—and enjoyed himself so much doing it—that he continued right on with the only thing he remembered by heart from his nine and a half years of schooling, the Gettysburg Address. He brought the house down with the finale, that sentence as gloriously resolute as any sounded in Heaven or uttered on earth since the world began. Raising and wiggling one of those huge hairy-knuckled, superflexible hands of his, plunging the longest of his inordinately long fingers right into the eyeball of his union audience each of the three times, he dramatically dropped his voice and rasped "the people."

"Everybody thought I got carried away by emotion," Ira told me. "That that's what fired me up. But it wasn't emotions. It was the first time I ever felt carried away by *intellect*. I understood for the first time in my life what the hell I was talking about. I understood what this country is all about."

After that night, on his weekends, on holidays, he travelled the Chicago area for the C.I.O., as far as Galesburg and Springfield, out to authentic Lincoln country, portraying Abraham Lincoln for C.I.O. conventions, cultural programs, parades, and picnics. He went on the U.E. radio show, where, even if nobody could see him standing two inches taller even than Lincoln, he did a bang-up job bringing Lincoln to the masses by speaking every word so that it made good plain sense. People began to take their kids along when Ira Ringold was to appear on the platform, and afterward, when whole families came up to shake his hand, the kids would ask to sit on his knee and tell him what they wanted for Christmas. Not so strangely, the unions he performed for were by and



"I don't know. It doesn't do anything for my little general—does it do anything for your little general?"

large locals that either broke with the C.I.O. or were expelled when C.I.O. president Philip Murray began in 1947 to rid member unions of Communist leadership and Communist membership.

But by '48 Ira was a rising radio star in New York, newly married to one of the country's most revered radio actresses and, for the moment, safely protected from the crusade that would annihilate forever, and not only from the labor movement, a pro-Soviet, pro-Stalin political presence in America.

How did he get from the record factory to a network drama show? Why did he leave Chicago and O'Day in the first place? It could never have occurred to me at that time that it had anything to do with the Communist Party, mainly because I never knew back then that he was a member of the Communist Party.

What I understood was that the radio writer Arthur Sokolow, visiting Chicago, happened to catch Ira's Lincoln act in a union hall on the West Side one night. Ira had already met Sokolow in the Army. He'd come to Iran, as a G.I., with the "This Is the Army" show. A lot of left-wing guys were touring with the show, and late one evening Ira had gone off with a few of them for a bull session during which, as Ira remembered it, they'd discussed "all the political stuff in the world." Among the group was Sokolow, whom Ira came quickly to admire as someone who was always battling for a cause. Because Sokolow had begun life, in Detroit, as a Jewish street kid fighting off the Poles, he was also completely recognizable, and Ira felt at once a kinship he'd never wholly had with the rootless Irishman O'Day.

By the time Sokolow, now a civilian writing "The Free and the Brave," happened to turn up in Chicago, Ira was onstage for a full hour as Lincoln, not only reciting or reading from speeches and documents but responding to audience questions about current political controversies in the guise of Abraham Lincoln, with Lincoln's high-pitched country twang and his awkward giant's gestures and his droll, plainspoken way. Lincoln supporting price controls. Lincoln condemning the Smith Act. Lincoln defending workers' rights. Lincoln vilifying Mississippi's Senator Bilbo. The union membership loved their stalwart autodidact's irresistible ventriloquism, his mishmash of Ringoldisms, O'Dayisms, Marxisms, and Lincolnisms ("Pour it on!" they shouted at bearded, black-haired Ira. "Give 'em hell, Abe!"), and so did Sokolow, who brought Ira to the attention of another Jewish ex-G.I., a New York soap-opera producer with left-leaning sympathies. It was the introduction to the producer that led to the audition that landed Ira the part of the scrappy super of a Brooklyn tenement on one of daytime radio's soap operas.

The salary was fifty-five dollars a week. Not much, even in 1948, but steady work and more money than he made at the record plant. And, almost immediately, he began doing other jobs as well, getting jobs everywhere, jumping into waiting taxis and rushing from studio to studio, from one daytime show to another, as many as six different shows a day, always playing characters with working-class roots, tough-talking guys truncated from their politics, as he explained it to me, in order to make their anger permissible: "The proletariat Americanized for the radio by cutting off their balls and their brains." It was all this work that propelled him, within months, onto Sokolow's prestigious weekly hour-long show, "The Free and the Brave," as a leading player.

Maybe there were more machinations than I knew of behind Ira's move to New York and his overnight radio triumph, but I didn't think so back then. I didn't have to. It didn't require Communist connections to explain Ira's overnight radio triumph to me. I just thought, This guy is wonderful. He *is* an iron man.

MY father, unlike my mother, didn't see Ira as a means of social advancement for me and was always perplexed and bothered by his calling me: what is this grown man's interest in this kid? He thought something complicated, if not downright sinister, was going on. "Where do you go with him?" my father asked me.

His suspiciousness erupted vehemently one night when he found me at my desk reading a copy of the *Daily Worker*. "I don't want the Hearst papers in my house," my father told me, "and I don't want *that* paper in my house. One is the mirror image of the other. If this man is giving you the *Daily Worker*—" "What 'man'?" "Your actor friend. *Rinn*, as he calls himself." "He doesn't give me the *Daily Worker*. I bought it downtown. I bought it myself. Is there a law against that?" "Who told you to buy it? Did he tell you to go out and buy it?" "He doesn't tell me to do anything." "I hope that's true." "I don't lie! It is!"

It was. I'd remembered Ira saying that there was a column in the *Worker* by Howard Fast, but it was on my own that I had bought the paper, across from Proctor's movie theatre at a Market Street newsstand, ostensibly to read Howard Fast but also out of simple, dogged curiosity. "Are you going to confiscate it?" I asked my father. "No—you're out of luck. I'm not going to make you a martyr to the First Amendment. I only hope that after you've read it and studied and thought about it you have the good sense to know that it's a sheet of lies and to confiscate it yourself."

Toward the end of the school year, when Ira invited me to spend a week up at his summer shack in Zinc Town, my father said I wasn't going unless Ira had a talk with him first. "Why?" I demanded to know.

"I want to ask him some questions."

"What are you, the House Un-American Activities Committee? Why are you making such a big thing out of this?"

"Because in my eyes *you* are a big thing. What's his telephone number in New York?"

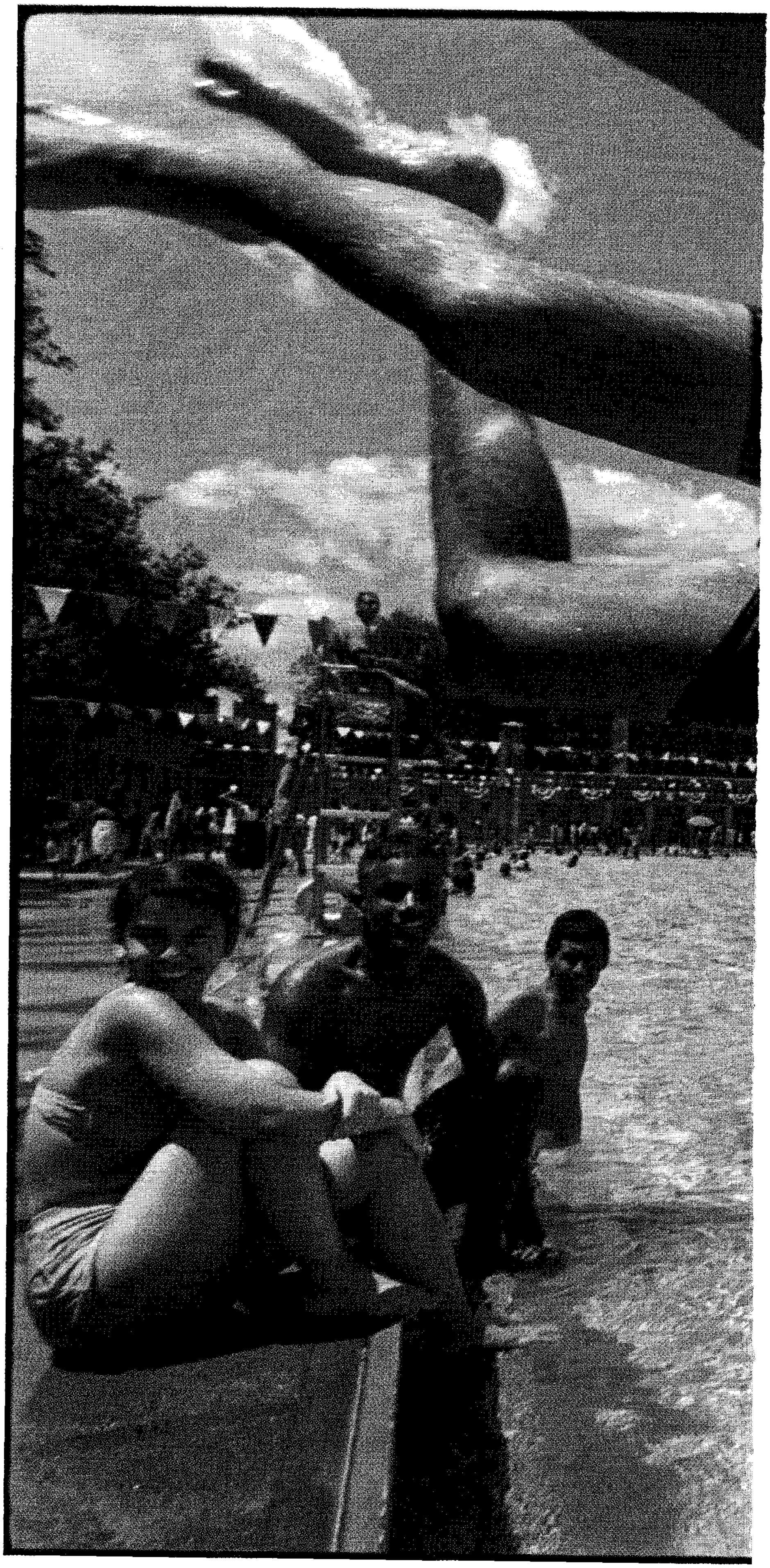
"You can't ask him questions. About what?"

"You have your right as an American to buy and read the *Daily Worker*? *I* have a right as an American to ask anybody anything I want. If he doesn't want to answer me, that's *his* right."

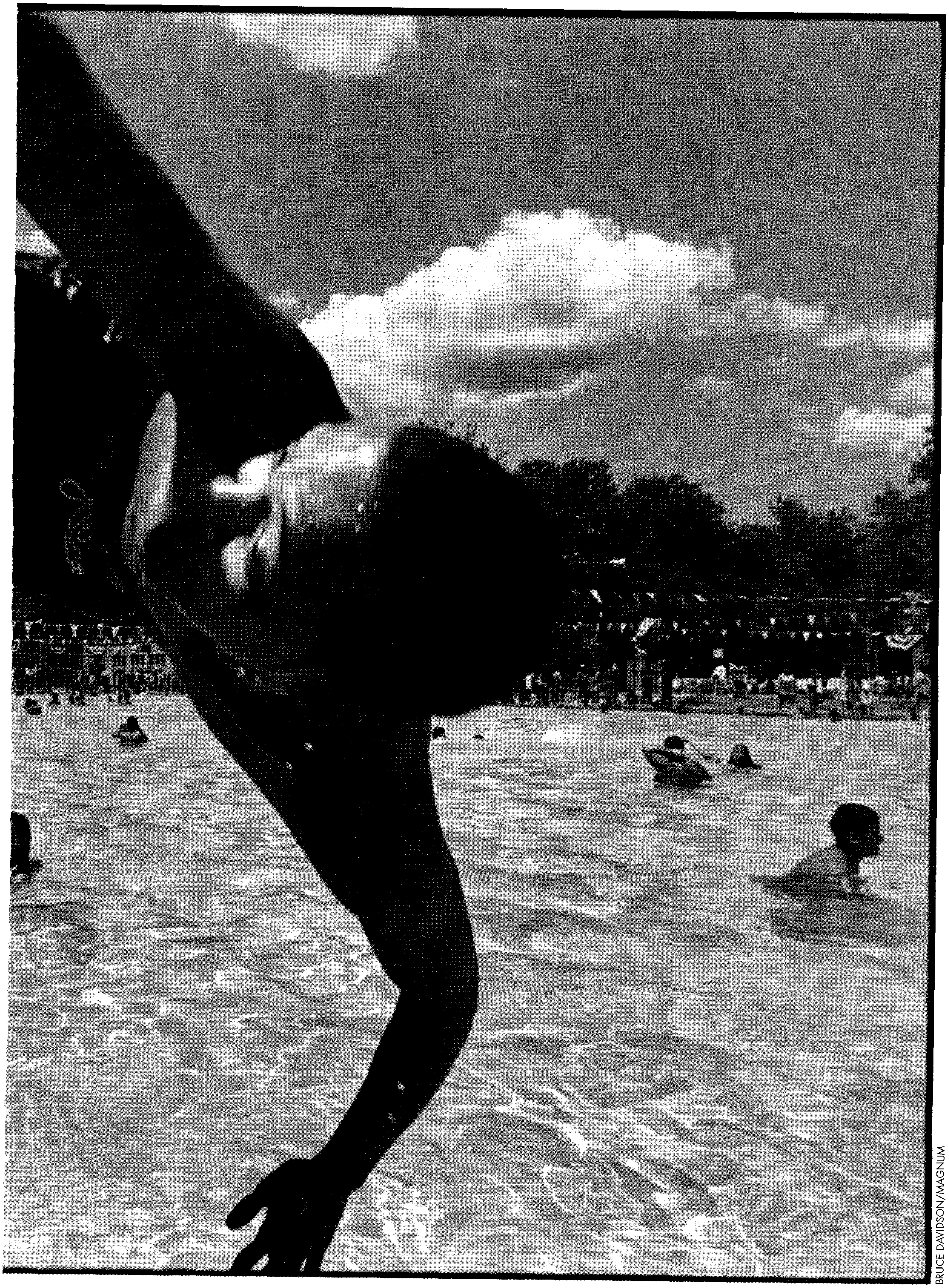
"And if he doesn't want to answer, what's he supposed to do, take the Fifth Amendment?"

"No. He can tell me to go jump in the lake. I just explained it to you—that's how we do it in the U.S.A. I don't say that's going to work for you in the Soviet Union with the secret police, but here that's all it ordinarily takes for a fellow-

TAKING THE PLUNGE



Three decades ago, the photographer Bruce Davidson entered the homes of several families living on East 100th Street, and for two years documented their lives with poetic candor. This summer, with a fellowship from the Open Society Institute, he has begun to revisit that block and others in East Harlem, sometimes taking up to a dozen rolls of film in a day. "It's a very passionate place, very warm, and very real," Davidson says. "Plus, the food is good up there." On July 2nd, he attended the inaugural festivities at the Thomas Jefferson Recreation Pool, at 112th Street and First Avenue. "This kid was Mr. Macho, showing off, and I liked that."



BRUCE DAVIDSON/MAGNUM

citizen to leave you alone about your political ideas."

"*Do* they leave you alone?" I asked bitterly. "Does Congressman Dies leave you alone? Does Congressman Rankin leave you alone? Maybe you better explain it to them."

I had to sit there—he told me I had to—and listen to him while he asked Ira, on the phone, to come over to his office for a talk. Iron Rinn and Eve Frame were the biggest things ever to enter the Zuckerman household from the outside world, yet it was clear from my father's tone that this didn't throw him at all.

"He said *yes*?" I asked when my father hung up.

"He said he'd be there if Nathan would be there. You're going to be there."

"Oh, no I'm not."

"Yep," my father said, "you are. You are if you want me even to begin to consider your going up there to visit. What are you afraid of, an open discussion of ideas? It's going to be democracy in action, next Wednesday, after school, at three-thirty in my office. You be on time, son."

My father's chiropody office was on the ground floor of a three-family house at the bottom of Hawthorne Avenue, a modest dwelling in need of a face-lift near the run-down edge of our otherwise plainly pedestrian neighborhood. I was there early, feeling sick to my stomach. Ira, looking serious and not at all enraged (as yet), arrived promptly at three-thirty. My father asked him to be seated.

"Mr. Ringold, Nathan is not a run-of-the-mill boy. He is an older son who is an excellent student and who, I believe, is advanced and mature beyond his years. We are very proud of him. I want to give him all the latitude I can. I try not to stand in his way in life, as some fathers do. But because I honestly happen to think that for him the sky is the limit, I don't want anything to happen to him. If anything should happen to this boy—"

My father's voice grew husky and he abruptly stopped talking. I knew that my father was choked up not merely because of me and my promise but because his two youngest brothers, the first members of that large, poor family of his who were targeted to go to a real college and become real doctors, had both died of illnesses in their late teens. Studio portrait photos of them rested next to each other in twin frames on our dining-room sideboard. I should have explained to Ira about Sam and Sidney, I thought.

"I have to ask you a question, Mr. Ringold, that I don't want to ask you. I don't consider another person's beliefs—religious, political, or otherwise—my business. I respect your privacy. I can assure you that whatever you say here will not go beyond this room. But I want to know whether you are a Communist, and I want my son to know whether you are a Communist. I'm not asking if you ever have been a Communist. I don't care about the past. I care about right now. I have to tell you that back before Roosevelt I was so disgusted with the way things were going in this country, and with the anti-Semitism and anti-Negro prejudice in this country, and with how the Republicans scorned the unfortunate in this country, and with how the greed of big business was milking the people of this country to death, that one day, right here in Newark—and this will come as a shock to my son, who thinks his father, a lifelong Democrat, is to the right of Franco—but one day . . . Well, Nathan," he said, looking now at me, "they had their headquarters—you know where the Robert Treat Hotel is? Right down the street. Upstairs. Thirty-eight Park Place. They had offices up there. One was the office of the Communist Party. I never even told this to your mother. She would have killed me. She was my girlfriend then—this must be 1930. Well, one time, one day, I was angry. Something had happened, I don't even remember what it was any longer, but I read something in the papers and I remember that I went up there, and nobody was there. The door was locked. They had gone to lunch. I rattled the door handle. That's as close as I got to the Communist Party. I rattled the door and said, 'Let me in.' You didn't know that, did you, son?"

"No," I said.

"Well, now you do. Luckily, that door was locked. And in the next election Franklin Roosevelt became the President, and the kind of capitalism that sent me down to the Communist Party office began to get an overhaul the likes of which this country had never seen. A great man saved this country's capitalism from the capitalists and saved patriotic people like me from Commu-

"This is another guy I blew away—pictured, of course, in happier times."

nism. Saved all of us from the dictatorial regime that *results* from Communism. Let me tell you something that shook me—the death of Masaryk. Did that bother you, Mr. Ringold, as much as it bothered me? I always admired Masaryk in Czechoslovakia, ever since I first heard his name and what he was doing for his people. I always thought of him as the Czech Roosevelt. I don't know how to account for his murder. Do you, Mr. Ringold? I was troubled by it. I couldn't believe the Communists could kill a man like that. But they did. . . . Sir, I don't want to get started having a political argument. I'm going to ask you one single question, and I'd like you to answer so that my son and I know where we stand. Are you a member of the Communist Party?"

"No, Doctor, I'm not."

"Now I want my son to ask you. Nathan, I want you to ask Mr. Ringold if he is now a member of the Communist Party."

To put such a question to somebody went against my every political principle. But because my father wanted me to and because my father had asked Ira already to no ill effect and because of Sam and Sidney, my father's dead younger brothers, I did it.

"Are you, Ira?" I asked him.

"Nope. No, sir."

"You don't go to meetings of the Communist Party?" my father asked.

"I do not."

"You don't plan, up where you want Nathan to visit you—what's the name of the place?"

"Zinc Town. Zinc Town, New Jersey."

"You don't plan up there to take him to any such meetings?"

"No, Doctor, I don't. I plan on taking him swimming and hiking and fishing."

"I'm glad to hear that," said my father. "I believe you, sir."

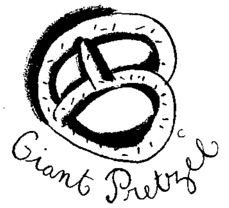
"May I now ask *you* a question?" Ira said, smiling at my father in that droll sidewise way he smiled when he was playing Abraham Lincoln. "Why do you have me down for a Red in the first place?"

"The Progressive Party, Mr. Ringold."

"Do you have Henry Wallace down for a Red? The former Vice-President to Mr. Roosevelt? Do you think Mr. Roosevelt would choose a Red for Vice-President of the United States of America?"

"It's not as simple as that," my father replied. "I wish it were. But what's going on in the world is not simple at all."

"Dr. Zuckerman," said Ira, changing tactics, "you wonder what I'm doing with Nathan? I envy him—that's what I'm doing with him. I envy that he has a father like you. I envy that he has a teacher like my brother. I envy that he has good eyes and can read without glasses a foot thick and isn't an idiot who's going to quit school so as to go out and dig ditches. I've got nothing hidden and nothing to hide, Doctor. Except that I wouldn't mind a son like him myself someday. Maybe the world today isn't simple, but this sure is: I get a kick out of talking to your boy. Not every kid in Newark takes as his hero Tom Paine."



Here my father stood up and extended his hand to Ira. "I *am* a father, Mr. Ringold—to *two* boys, to Nathan and to Henry, his younger brother, who is also somebody to crow about. And my responsibilities as a father . . . Well, that's all that this has been about."

Ira took my father's ordinary-sized hand in his huge one and pumped it once very hard, so hard—with such sincerity and warmth—that oil, or at least water, a pure geyser of something, might as a result have come gushing from my father's mouth. "Dr. Zuckerman," Ira said, "you don't want your son stolen from you, and nobody here is going to steal him."

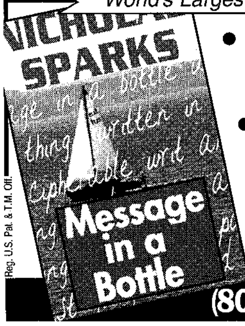
Whereupon I had to make a superhuman effort not to start to bawl. I had to pretend to myself that my whole aim in life was not to cry, never to cry, at the sight of two men affectionately shaking hands—and I barely managed to succeed. They'd done it! Without shouting! Without bloodshed! Without the motivating, distorting rage! Magnificently they had pulled it off—though largely because Ira was not telling us the truth.

IRA and I left my father's office together, and to celebrate—purportedly to celebrate my upcoming summer visit to Zinc Town but also, complicitously, to celebrate our victory over my dad—we went to Stosh's, a few blocks away, to have one of Stosh's overstuffed ham sandwiches. I ate so much with Ira at four-fifteen that when I got home, at five of six, I had no appetite and sat at my place at the table while everybody else ate my mother's dinner—and it was then that I observed in my father's face the wound. I had planted it there earlier by going out the door of his office with Ira and not staying behind to talk a little to him until the next patient showed up.

At first I tried to think that maybe I was guiltily imagining that wound, because of having felt not necessarily contemptuous of him but certainly superior, leaving, virtually arm in arm, with Iron Rinn of "The Free and the Brave." My father didn't want his son stolen from him, and though, strictly speaking, nobody had stolen anybody, the man was no fool and knew that he had lost and, Communist or no Communist, the six-foot-six-inch intruder had won. I saw in my father's face a look of resigned disappointment, his kind gray eyes softened by—distressfully subdued by—something midway between melancholy and futility. It was a look that would never be entirely forgotten by me when I was alone with Ira, or, later, with Leo Glucksman, Johnny O'Day, or whomever. Just by taking instruction from these men, I seemed to myself somehow to be selling my father short. His face with that look on it was always looming up, superimposed on the face of the man who was then educating me in life's possibilities. His face bearing the wound of betrayal.

The moment when you first recognize that your father is vulnerable to others is bad enough, but when you understand that he's vulnerable to *you*, still needs you more than you any longer think you need him, when you realize that you might actually be able to frighten him, even to *quash* him if you wanted to—well, the idea is at such cross-purposes with routine filial inclinations that it does not even begin to make sense. All the laboring he had gone through to get to be a chiropodist, a provider, a protector, and I was now running off with another man. It is, morally as well as emotionally, a more dangerous game than one knows at the time, getting all those extra fathers like a pretty girl gets beaux. But that was what I was doing. Always making myself eminently adoptable, I discovered the sense of betrayal that comes of trying to find a surrogate father even though you love your own. It isn't that I ever denounced my father to Ira or anyone else for a cheap advantage—it was enough just, by exercising my freedom, to dump the man I loved for somebody else. If only I had hated him, it would have been easy. ♦

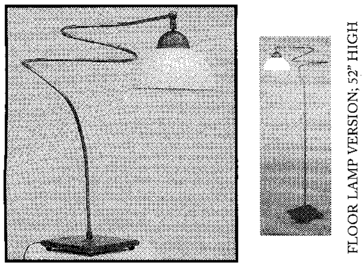
BOOKS ON TAPE® #1
World's Largest Selection



- Bestsellers on cassette
- 4,500 titles all full-length
- Call for more information

(800) 88-BOOKS
Reg. U.S. Pat. & T.M. Off.
Box 7900-N, Newport Beach, CA 92658

NEW CONCEPT DESIGN



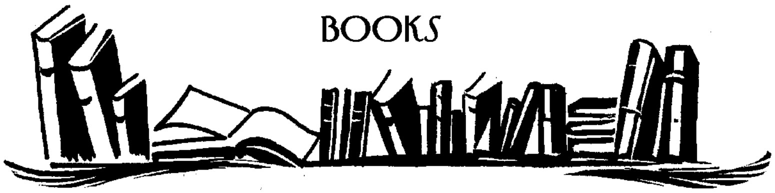
MODEL: SWIRL. A timeless blend of design & natural mtls. 24" high in hand rubbed dark bronze, Vermont slate base, etched opal white shade. 100W.
$109.00 each, 2 for $199.00
Floor Lamp Version $159.00
mail or phone orders
NEW HAVEN LIGHTING 800-243-3123
P. O. Box 6353 Hamden, CT 06517

CARNIVALE IN RIO
THEATRE CRUISE
Starring **CLIFF ROBERTSON**
PATRICIA NEAL ★ DANA IVEY
and 5 OTHER BROADWAY STARS
FEBRUARY 15-28, 1999
THEATRE AT SEA • 1-800-752-9732 (N.Y.)

HOME FROM HOME in LONDON
Private Flats & Houses for Short Rentals
TOLL FREE: 1-800 748 9783
TEL: 011-44 171 584 8914 FAX: 823 8433
E-Mail: homefromhome@compuserve.com
Internet: www.homefromhome.co.uk

Hats for Women with Hair Loss
www.softhats.com
Call or write JUST IN TIME for a FREE brochure.
INQUIRIES FROM RETAILERS WELCOME
P.O. Box 27693, Phila., PA 19118 • (215) 247-8777

CHAPEL HILL, NORTH CAROLINA
Retire to Fearrington, a Country Village full of bluebirds, hollyhocks, and fascinating people of all ages.
Please write, call or come and see us.
VISIT OUR WEBSITE: http://www.fearrington.com
2000N Fearrington Post, Pittsboro, NC 27312. 800-277-0130



THE MARRIAGE MYSTIQUE

The Singleton angst of Bridget Jones vs. the joys of postfeminist solitude.

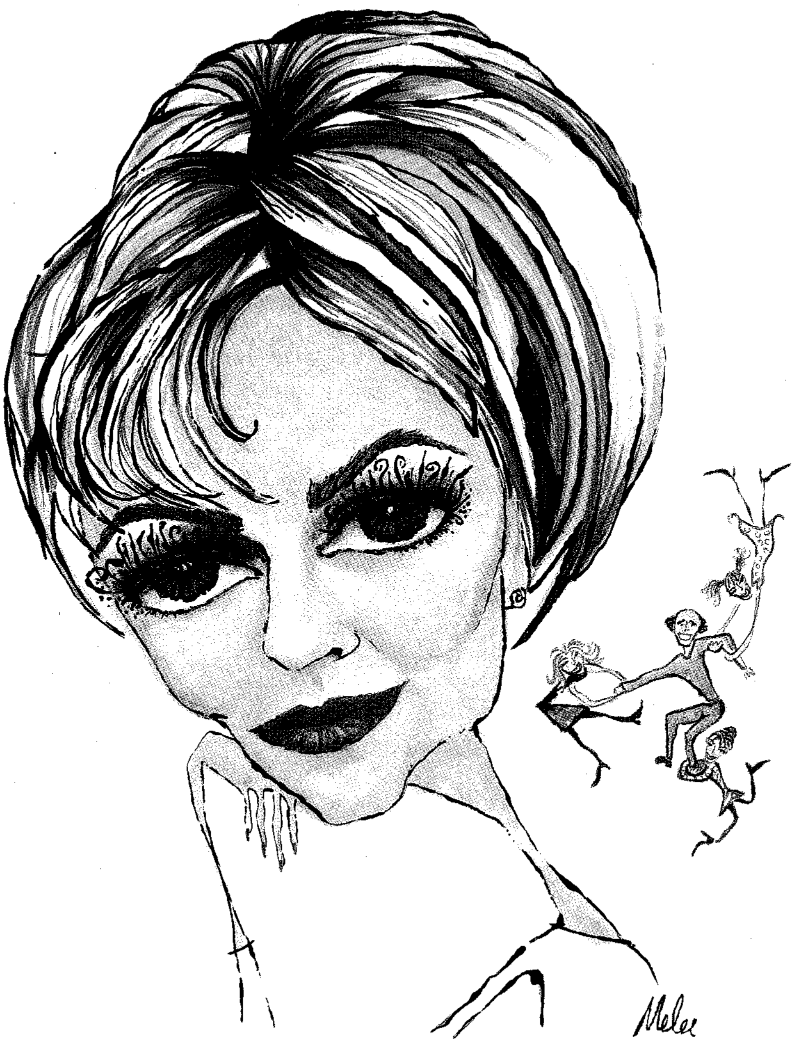
BY DAPHNE MERKIN

If Gloria Steinem had told the whole truth—while she stood around photogenically on podiums, her long striped hair tucked into tinted aviator glasses, issuing gnomic homilies like "A woman without a man is like a fish without a bicycle"—she might have sounded like Bridget Jones. God knows, both women worry about the size of their thighs, although only one of them has gone public with that undignified anxiety. Bridget Jones, of course, is the inspired, panicky heroine of "Bridget Jones's Diary" (Viking; $22.95), the best-selling novel by Helen Fielding. Bridget is in her thirties, and she works in the ostensibly glamorous media world—first in publishing, then in television. She has a degree in English, discusses the Culture of Entitlement with her friends, and has a mother who has read Germaine Greer, but Bridget feels clueless. She ponders everything, from the tattered state of her panty-hose supply ("Locate last pair of black opaque tights twisted into rope-like object speckled with bits of tissue") to the possibility of her being, unbeknownst to her, under official surveillance: "Open paper to read that convicted murderer in America is convinced the authorities have planted a microchip in his buttocks. . . . Horrified by thought of similar microchip being in own buttocks, particularly in the mornings."

Most of all, though, Bridget obsesses about being one of the dreaded "Singletons"—i.e., unmarried—and about her lack of "inner poise." Fielding's heroine is a true casualty of the high/low split in women's agitprop: one minute, she takes comfort in the "Men Are from Mars, Women Are from Venus" approach; the next, she buoys herself by parroting her friend Sharon's self-congratulatory feminist claims ("We are a pioneer generation daring to refuse to compromise in love and relying on our own economic power"); and, in yet the next, she confesses endearingly that as "a child of Cosmopolitan culture" she has been "traumatized by supermodels and too many quizzes."

Fielding, a graduate of Oxford, is a former BBC producer and is herself a forty-year-old Singleton. Her novel, which began as an autobiographical column in the *Independent*, was a huge hit when it was published in Britain, in 1996, eventually selling more than a million copies. Since arriving here, in June, it has risen to No. 3 on the best-seller list; Fielding is also adapting it for the movies. Although its wry, self-deprecating tone and some of its allusions are very English (Bridget refers to her boss's "Sloaney arrogance"), "Bridget Jones's Diary" is the sort of cultural artifact that is recognizably larger than itself. As such, it has generated instant strong opinions: you're either for it or agin it. Within nanoseconds of its appearance on this shore, fans and detractors weighed in, and the responses were unusually visceral, as though the book had resounded on a level that went deeper than considered opinion or literary critique. Elizabeth Gleick wrote a short piece for the New York *Times Book Review* in which she gamely embraced Bridget's tribulations, ranging from the length of time it takes her to get dressed in the morning (three hours and thirty-five minutes) to her constant longing to be someone other than who she is: "Wish to be like Tina Brown, though not, obviously, quite so hard-working." Two weeks later, in the Sunday Styles section of the *Times*, Alex Kuczynski gave

Bridget a tongue-lashing: she saw the novel as fit for "a 13-year-old girl," and assessed it in the prim jargon of the social sciences as being about "learned helplessness." She acknowledged that the book aimed to be "a sassy spoof of urban manners," but thought it merited pitying disdain rather than complicit laughter: "Bridget is such a sorry spectacle, wallowing in her man-crazed helplessness, that her foolishness cannot be excused." The one thing nobody accused Bridget of being was boring; even the irate Kuczynski admitted that she couldn't put the book down.



Helen Fielding's Bridget Jones desperately wants to become one of the "Smug Marrieds"—the alternative is too frightening to contemplate.

ROBERT MELEE

Maybe the best example of anti-Bridget backlash was a cover story in the June 29th issue of *Time*, entitled "Is Feminism Dead?" (Yawn.) Written by Ginia Bellafonte in the sort of fevered, culture-maven style that often passes for biting commentary, the essay implicated Fielding's heroine in the ongoing failure of the women's movement to live up to the glorious war-dance days of the sixties and seventies. It replayed a familiar and murky argument: that the rigorous, socially conscious agenda of Old Guard feminists, like Betty Friedan, Steinem, and Kate Millett, has given way to the flighty, self-involved "Duh Feminism" of the nineties. Bellafonte trots out a tired lineup of culprits, including Ally McBeal, Elizabeth Wurtzel, and Katie Roiphe. (I love "Ally McBeal." To my mind, the show is one of the best written on TV, and actually manages to make prime-time entertainment out of the drama of the inner life.) Nancy Friday, of all people, is produced as a witness for the prosecution. "She is like a little animal," Friday, who unblushingly revealed her boudoir approach to men in a memoir, "The Power of Beauty," says about McBeal. "You want to put her on a leash." Having just invoked the views of this "sex-positive feminist," the author turns around and bemoans the fact that "the concept of feminism is often misapplied": she blows off Alanis Morissette—too much introspection about bad moods and ex-boyfriends—as unworthy of girlpowerhood, while holding up Ginger Spice as a preferable model. Ginger Spice? My eight-year-old daughter would be delighted to hear it.

One might counter this righteous policing of who is or isn't the correct incarnation of late-twentieth-century womankind by saying simply, To each her own version of liberation. Of course, the trouble with ideologies generally is that they traffic in rhetoric and burnished images rather than in mortifying truths. What's really bothering people about "Bridget Jones" is that it signals the return of what is referred to in English-lit classes as the Marriage Plot. Uh-oh. We were supposed to have fast-forwarded past that theme, weren't we? Or at least it's supposed to have receded discreetly, while we were focussing on more enlightened variations—the Career Plot or the Looking for a Self Plot. So what's it doing back in the spotlight? In her frantic search for a role model, Bridget considers at various moments Goldie Hawn, Susan Sarandon, Jane Seymour, and Kathleen Tynan (who, Bridget informs us, thanks to her endless perusal of lifestyle magazines, "when writing, was to be found immaculately dressed, sitting at a small table in the center of the room sipping a glass of chilled white wine"). But underneath her black Lycra miniskirt and her clever E-mail messages Fielding's droll heroine bears more resemblance to Elizabeth Bennet than to Elizabeth Hurley: she's a Jane Austen kind of girl, whose story could just as well begin with the sentence "It is a truth universally acknowledged that a single woman in possession of thirtysomething years must be in want of a husband." Bridget wishes more than anything to become one of the "Smug Marrieds," and she dreams of having a house like her friend Magda's, with "crisp sheets and many storage jars full of different kinds of pasta."

She is intent on finding a mate, you see, not because she is insufficiently evolved or because she has an unreal notion of what marriage entails. (She isn't, for instance, stuck on the burning contemporary topic of whether the sexes communicate with each other well enough; she knows that talking is what girlfriends are for.) No, Bridget wishes to hook Mr. Right because she fears the alternative: "dying alone and being found three weeks later half-eaten by an Alsatian." To this end she is willing to drive for several hours to a New Year's Day buffet hosted by her parents' friends to which Mark Darcy (Darcy: ring any bells?), a divorced barrister with "masses of money," is invited. To this end she is also willing to overlook the "emotional fuckwittage" of men over thirty who, realizing that women over thirty are demographically challenged, feel free to sleep with them for months, all the while whining about their commitment problems. So she spends an entire Sunday primping for a date, because she knows that looks count even more now that pregnancy has become photogenic: "Am starting to get carried away with idea of self as Calvin Klein-style mother figure, poss. wearing crop-top or throwing baby in the air, laughing fulfilledly." And she scavenges in the vast dumping ground of self-help—"I read somewhere that the best gift a woman can bring to a man is tranquility"—because she recognizes that the ultimate form of self-help just may be the companionship provided by a good marriage. "Totally alone," she notes at one in the morning, just pages before her luck changes and Darcy (whom she has misjudged on the basis of a dorky, diamond-patterned sweater) declares himself. "Entire year has been failure."

Fielding's novel sits so lightly on the reader that it is easy to overlook the skill with which it has been assembled. True, it has the feel more of a sustained stunt than of a full-blown fictional universe, and an ornate subplot involving Bridget's mother's affair with a swindling Lothario is an irritating contrivance. But Bridget's persona is lit by a spark of genius: she is both Everywoman and an implicitly ironic observer of Everywoman, as though Helen Gurley Brown and Nora Ephron had traded secrets over a low-calorie lunch. One of the pleasures of reading this book is sensing that you're privy to the gossip of the harem—what women talk about when they're not putting a bright face on things (and Gloria

AT THE ATELIERS

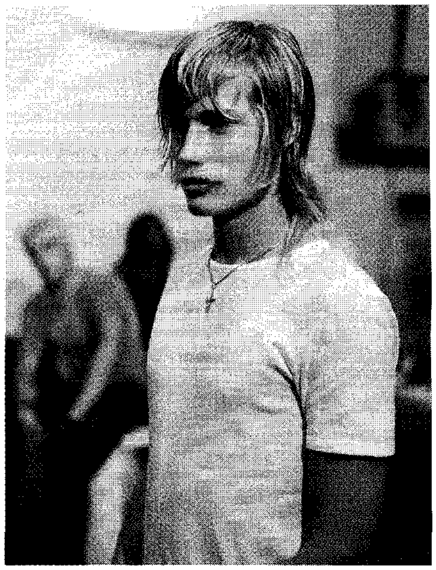
MODEL BEHAVIOR

In the category of Careers Rich in Embarrassing Moments, the award goes to the male models who are currently braving the catwalks in the New York fall shows, having negotiated the runways of Milan and Paris three weeks ago. In the European shows, the menswear options included trousers festooned with rhinestones (Gucci); bondage straps (Ferré); clothes worn inside out (Comme des Garçons Hommes Plus); and mesh underwear (Mugler). Shamefaced chic, however, was not an option. The models, having learned to mask all signs of sartorial trauma, employed either blank in-denial expressions ("Am I really here? I don't think so") or a kind of cartoon menace peculiar to psychopaths and television wrestlers. "Laugh," one model seemed to be daring us, "and I will leap over and kill you." And perhaps he would have, if his fetching micro-mini briefs, by D², hadn't been so tight as to preclude the attempt.

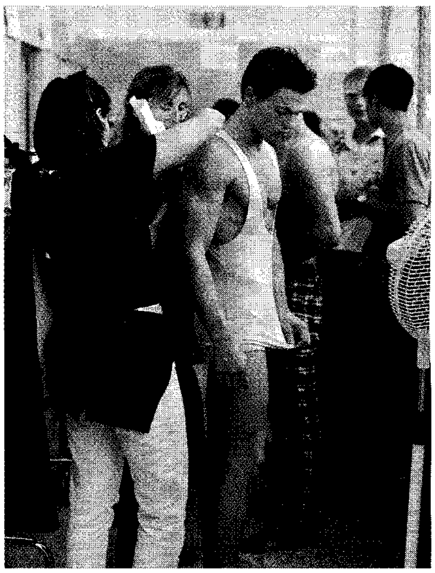
Backstage, the frenzy of men's styling ranged from toenail painting for those open-sandal occasions to false mustaches and hair extensions for what the designer Jean Paul Gaultier called his "drunken-German-tourist look." In Milan, which is generally considered the capital of menswear, "directional" trends were everywhere: abbreviated trousers, short, militaristic haircuts, and a new crop of scrawnier models. "They're definitely slimmer but toned," Jim Moore, the creative director of *GQ*, said after Gianfranco Ferré's presentation, which in past seasons had resembled a mass rally of the Chippendale dancers.

Scott, a slender twenty-year-old from Chicago who racked up seventeen shows in Milan, epitomizes the new look. "I like the chance to perform," he said. Does he worry about wearing short trousers? "No, I think it's an English-style look that school kids used to wear." But he's twenty. "Yeah, right." He is currently reading "Think and Grow Rich," by Napoleon Hill.

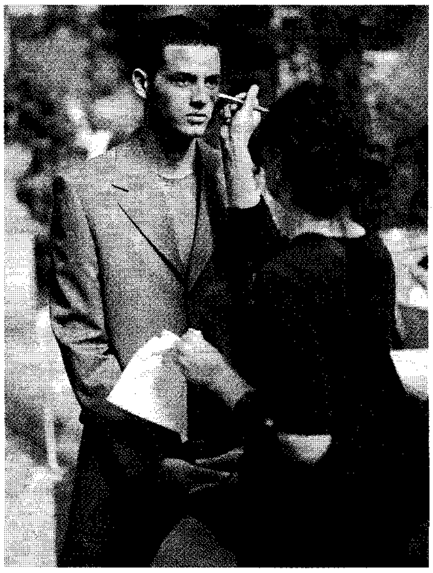
—Michael Roberts



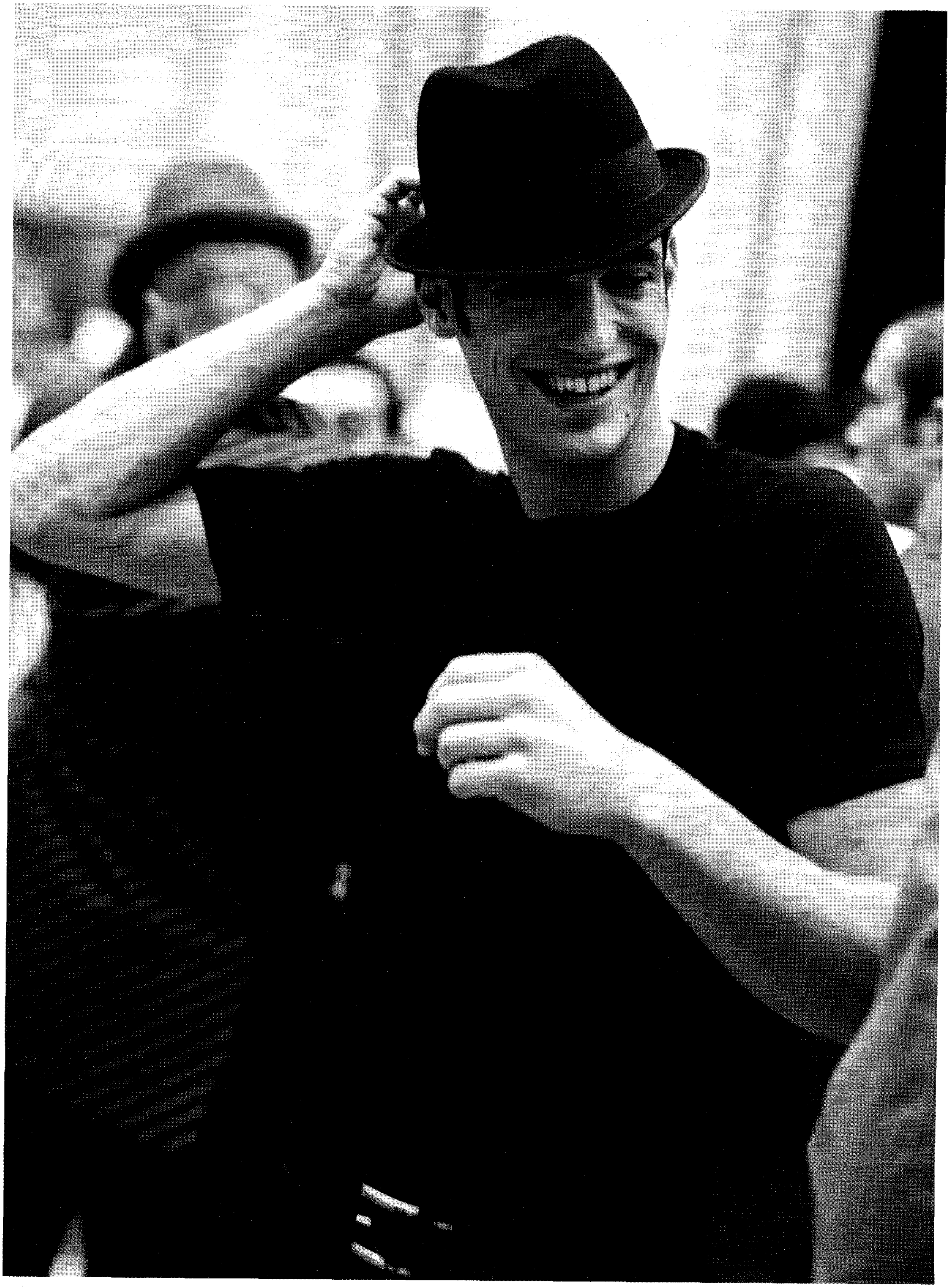
A fake mustache and hair extensions for a Jean Paul Gaultier model.



A model being dressed in a Gianfranco Ferré creation.



A Versace model has his face retouched.



Backstage at Moschino before the show, a model adjusts his hat. Photographs by Michael Roberts.

Steinem isn't within earshot). Without getting too high-flown, you could say that Bridget Jones is about the anxiety of self-presentation. Certainly her sensibility—half gullible consumer, half astute commentator—nicely illustrates the split between women's packaged and instinctual selves. I find it mystifying, in any case, that some readers have regarded Bridget's magpie-like nibbling at glossy magazines—with their service pieces on reducing your pores and refashioning your personality—as a sorry symptom of the makeover culture rather than a sly subversion of it.

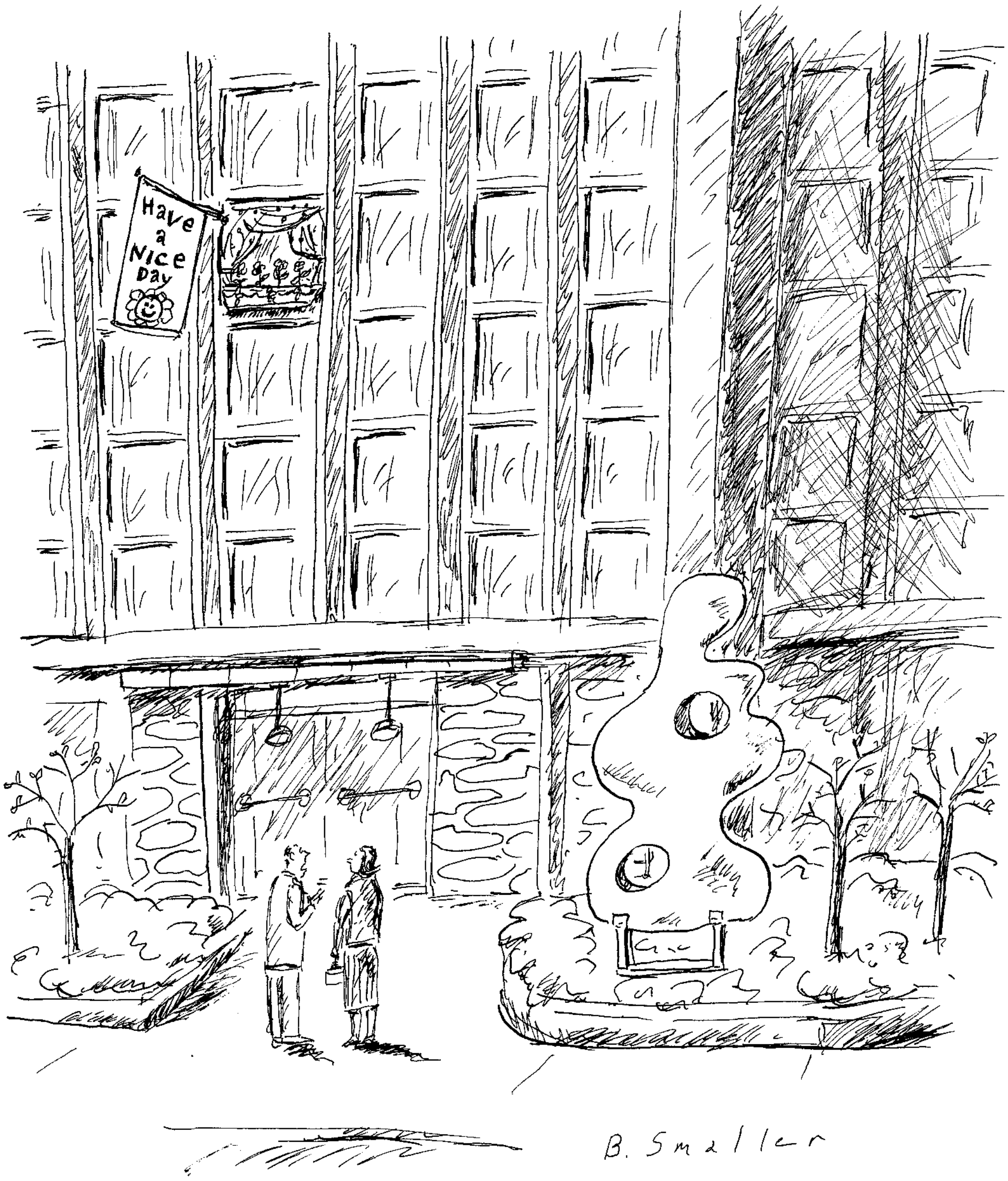
THERE is something immensely consoling about Bridget's acknowledgment of her fears—specifically, the primal female fear of ending up manless and alone. The novel provokes you to reconsider the question of whether marriage remains the defining experience, if not the signal accomplishment, of a woman's life. Marcelle Clements suggests that it is not in her recent book, "The Improvised Woman: Single Women Reinventing Single Life" (Norton; $26.95). This is harem gossip of another sort, conceived with altogether different intentions. I'm probably the ideal reader for this book: divorced, in my early forties. But while Bridget's constant exhortations to herself to "stop being so neurotic and stop dreading things" made me feel less lonely, I came away from reading Clements with the odd sense that there was nothing wrong with me that couldn't be explained away. Now *that* made me lonely. Clements has interviewed about a hundred single women, ranging in age from their twenties to their nineties. They include widows, divorcées, young women who are wary of the tender trap (like one who, when asked whether she feels envious of her married peers, answers that "most of the people who are married I look at and say, 'Thank God I'm not in that' "), as well as the never-to-be-married types who used to be called spinsters or old maids. They are an exceptionally engaging lot, and many struck me as being not only candid but fairly self-aware; it's hard to imagine a similar group of men talking about themselves with such a lack of bravura or posturing.

Clements has loosely organized her material along thematic lines into eight chapters (some with gratingly cute titles, such as "No Cat Food, Thank You—The Poor Old Thing vs. The Ball Buster"). Among the subjects discussed are the notorious man shortage, which is attributed to either an intangible but site-specific deficiency ("The men are hopeless in New York") or the general prevalence of gay men; one woman hadn't been on a date in six years, and many haven't gone out since their last serious relationship ended. Some of them confess to harboring poignant wedding fantasies, like the unmarried Ellen P., who says, "Even now, I religiously read the section of the *Times* about weddings. I'm completely haunted by the idea of this configuration." Others take a cooler view of the institution: "The only thing a husband gets you is a dining room." We discover that one of the advantages of living alone is that "you can leave three bitten chocolates in the box," while a woman who says she's heavily into Tantric sex admits, "It's very hard to do alone. I can't seem to find my own G-spot." Aside from these occasional graphic flashes, there is remarkably little direct discussion of the sexual cost of being single. Perhaps women are better able than men to shut down the apparatus of arousal. Phillipa C., a thrice-married fifty-year-old, believes that chasteness and motherhood go together: "A mother turns off her sex so she can have sexy physical contact with her children." A few of the women have stepped back from the whole fraught arena of desiring or being desired, preferring to concentrate on cucumbers or *Shabbas* candles; Regina M. describes her vibrator as "a sort of commitment to self-sufficiency." But it's clear that this approach has its limits: "I am not sure what to do about the cuddle thing," Mary Ann B. muses. "Because nobody cuddles with their vibrators." There is much talk about home décor, especially bedrooms (enormous attention is paid to sheets and their thread count), and the difficulty single women of any age have in setting up the house they've always wanted without a man in the picture. "I'm trying to figure out if home is still my father's house," Camille O. says.

The interviews are absorbing, although the women's comments rapidly begin to seem disembodied. (Clements's characterizations, alternately coy and generic, don't help. How is Monica V., "48, divorced, midwestern entre-

NSPORT
IO. TEXAS.
ENGLISH SPOKEN

preneur . . . bemused by the course her life had assumed," supposed to take on a distinctive life in one's mind? Or Callie S., a "real estate agent who has raised her youngest daughter as a single mother"? This weakness may be endemic to the form, but the book would have been greatly helped by some straightforward capsule biographies at the beginning.) Clements has written a prefatory essay to each chapter which is filled with factoids (she places the official homosexuality rate among American men at a whopping fifteen per cent), stimulating conjectures ("An ability to break up with someone . . . has become no less a sign of self-esteem than the capacity to attract a mate"), and an easy use of psychoanalytic concepts ("phallic mothers" and "female genital anxiety").



"The board is going to have to talk to 5-G again."

What's most striking about these essays, however, is not their style but their programmatic purpose, which is to dispel the unsettling atmosphere that has been gradually clouding over the feminist reconstruction of the world. Whether it was the famous 1986 study stating that if a woman hadn't married by thirty-five her chances of doing so fell to five per cent or the gloomy news that the better educated a woman was the less chance she had of finding a mate, various cultural indices have suggested that bras might be burned and consciousnesses might be raised but human nature was irrevocably conservative. If you tried to rechoreograph the dance of the sexes, in other words, you might end up a wallflower. The demographics are undeniable: there are nearly forty-two million single women in this country, up by three million since the beginning of the nineties. And for every woman Clements interviews who boasts about the "privilege of singleness" there are several who observe that the "whole world is in twos" or who seem bewildered by their situation. "It's so difficult to be single in this society," blurts Martha H., who is successful, very attractive, and has never married, "that no one in her right mind would choose to be single if she could do otherwise." With the exception of a few career loners or embittered divorcées, not many of the author's subjects appear to have chosen singleness voluntarily. Rather, they are making the best of the situation that they find themselves in, which is surely more valiant than drowning in self-pity. But Clements ignores the tentative accommodations and brute social truths that are offered up in the interviews in favor of making cheerful assertions about "the romance of independence" and the perfectly "reasonable option" of singleness. She concedes in her introduction that "feminism did not replace marriage as a source of definition," but as the book proceeds her tone becomes increasingly messianic. Toward the end, you can almost hear the trumpets blare: "Because what has really happened is that women now can indeed have it all: the phallus, the womb, the sperm, the baby, the job, the home, the works. Or none of it, and still be a woman."

Once you establish an agenda, any-

BRIEFLY NOTED

The Everlasting Story of Nory, by Nicholson Baker (Random House; $22). Baker once again explores the imperfect grooves of consciousness—this time in the person of an endearing nine-year-old American girl who has moved to England with her parents and her toddler brother, Frank, a.k.a. Littleguy. Her stories are filled with perfect misspellings, non-sequitur endings, and interesting subjects of all sizes—like the deathwatch beetles that eat lead in Threll Cathedral, and the edge of the universe, which has lots of walls and fields and cows ("She kept walking and climbing . . . getting more and more bothered by the infinity of it").

A World Away, by Stewart O'Nan (Holt; $23). Set during the Second World War, this bleak but tender novel chronicles a Long Island family's struggle to stay intact. There are James and Anne Langer, whose marriage is failing; Rennie, their enlisted (and missing) son; Dorothy, his pregnant, lonely wife; and Jay, the second, overprotected son, whose nightmares bring the shadowy claustrophobia of war eerily close to home. The plot is familiar, but O'Nan's description of life in the face of daily devastation—both personal and historical—is unfaltering.

Dear Genius: The Letters of Ursula Nordstrom, edited by Leonard S. Marcus (HarperCollins; $22.95). These letters, written by Harper's long-term children's-book editor (1940-73), are irresistible. They document Nordstrom's rebellion against the mealy-mouthed gentility of books that treated children as innocents to be shielded from almost everything: the children's librarian at the New York Public Library thought that "Stuart Little" should be suppressed because mice were unpleasant. Nordstrom's motto was "Good books for bad children."

Outside Lies Magic, by John R. Stilgoe (Walker; $21). Stilgoe writes like someone letting you in on a really cool secret—several secrets, in fact—as he teases out the hidden meanings behind often overlooked features of our cities and towns. Along the way, he explains why railroads are coming back, how stores evolve in shopping plazas, and the obscure relationship between the cost of fire insurance and the layout of Main Street. In Stilgoe's world, you don't have to go very far to be an explorer if you pay the right kind of attention.

The Bird Catcher, by Marie Ponsot (Knopf; $22). Like the grieving widow in Ponsot's sonnet "Festival of Bread," whose spirits are leavened in the act of making, the poet "kneads silence down into dough, and lets it rise." Whether exploring a shipwreck or a bed of perennials, the poems reveal the moral drama enacted just beneath the surfaces of the natural world. Ponsot attends to elegant forms without losing sight of what they are there to express: the cadences of a life passionately considered.

---

thing can be massaged to fit into it. The spectre of loneliness which haunts these pages gets transmuted by Clements into something warm and cozy called "creative solitude." (The very phrase makes me want to run screaming in the other direction, into the arms of one of those hopeless male specimens.) In this creative solitude, as Clements envisions it, women don't give themselves pedicures or watch gobs of late-night television or, heaven knows, plot to call matchmakers or answer personal ads. No, they have become "reluctant mystics," attuned to the ineffable—when they're not meditating on the crucial matter of thread count, that is. The wackiest of the author's theories is that "bed linen chitchat is not a sign of a regression in women's discourse, but rather a paradoxical proof of how much progress has been made." Although the only person I have ever passionately discussed my sheets with is a gay decorator, Clements believes that single women have a special connection to sheets, on account of "their intimacy with solitude." These women no longer accept their "sexual wallflower" status, she says, "exemplified by rough sheets, hard pillows, and a creaky mattress of old worn out springs." Nowadays, they have a consumer's paradise of bed linen to choose from—"matelassé, piqué, dotted Swiss, Porthault, Egyptian cotton, English linen, chenille . . . " The list goes on and on, for the truly discriminating. One might just as well argue that these sheets are less a luxurious symbol of autonomy than a form of compensation for a lack of body warmth—for sleeping alone. "You don't have to have sex to rate a 208-threads-per-inch count," Clements solemnly notes. "All you need is a Visa card." True, but a little sex wouldn't hurt those nice new sheets, either.

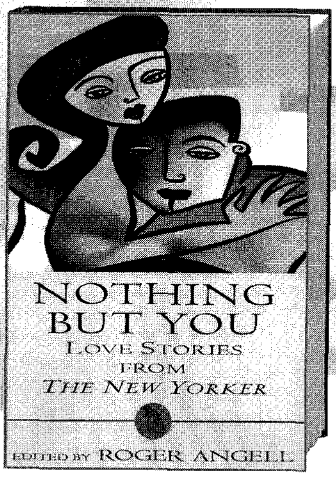
When my daughter was still young enough for bedtime lullabies, I used to sing her a lugubrious tune I had learned many years earlier, when I took a short-lived series of guitar lessons. I loved the limpid, minor-key sound of the music, but I think I responded to the mournful lyrics even more: "I never will marry / I'll be no man's wife / I intend to stay single / all the rest of my life. / Some say that love is a splendid thing / it only has caused me pain / and the only boy I ever loved / has gone on that midnight train." The longing and resignation spoke to my brooding teen-age soul, but I think the song has stayed with me all these years because it is a cautionary tale, connecting the fate of a single woman with opportunities missed. "This is *all* choice," insists Monica V., who earlier says that the reason she went to college was to meet "a better type" of husband. "And there's nothing pathetic about it." The truth of the matter is probably a shade less didactic: it's not all choice, but that doesn't make being a single woman any the more pathetic.

Still, there's something wishful—if not disingenuous—at the core of Clements's argument, beginning with the selective presentation of her own life. We learn little about her: that she came to America from France when she was ten, and that she acquired a collection of something called Ponytail desk accessories. She tells us that she was briefly married and then, "after the nasty and protracted breakup of an eleven-year relationship," found herself alone at the beginning of the nineties. She refers to a pre-school-age son, but never specifies whether she's his birth or adoptive mother (I assume the latter). I mention these autobiographical details because, sparse as they are, they don't suggest the trajectory of a woman who intended to remain alone—and who, I might add, could meet someone tomorrow. In fact, since my own mother has taken to musing that I may not be, after all, the kind of woman who was meant to be a Smug Married, I'm a little nervous. Is this a sign of open-mindedness on her part, or has she just given up? Clements states that "the desperate single belongs to the past," but that's like saying the Marriage Plot is dead and gone. I wonder whether any of the women in her brave new world, looking at their daughters, would choose for them the pleasures of creative solitude over the less creative and sometimes monotonous intimacy of marriage. As Felicia C., the forty-four-year-old mother of Anna, an eleven-year-old girl, puts it, "How would I feel if Anna turned out to be single? Sad." ♦

A LANDMARK
ANTHOLOGY OF
NEW YORKER
LOVE STORIES

CHOSEN BY SENIOR EDITOR
ROGER ANGELL

Raymond Carver
Jamaica Kincaid
John Updike
Alice Adams
Woody Allen
Vladimir Nabokov
Alice Munro
John O'Hara
Mavis Gallant
Gabriel García Márquez



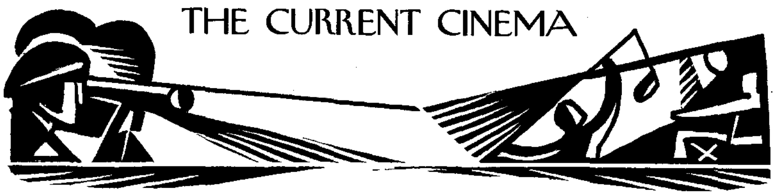
The first anthology of the magazine's fiction in more than thirty years! Nearly forty of the biggest names in American fiction offer their most memorable stories on the subject of love—from poignant tales of rose-red romance to the oddest and most surprising trysts.

For credit card orders,
call toll-free 1-800-426-9922.
Or send your name and address with
check or money order for $19.95*
(20% off the cover price of $25.95) plus
$3.50 each for shipping and handling, to:
The Condé Nast Collection
P.O. Box 10214, Dept. 475145-147
Des Moines, IA 50336

*Please add applicable sales tax in
CA, CO, GA, IA, IL, KY, MA, MI, NJ, NY, OH.
Allow up to 4 weeks for delivery.

RANDOM HOUSE
http://www.randomhouse.com/

Illustration: Liselotte Watkins



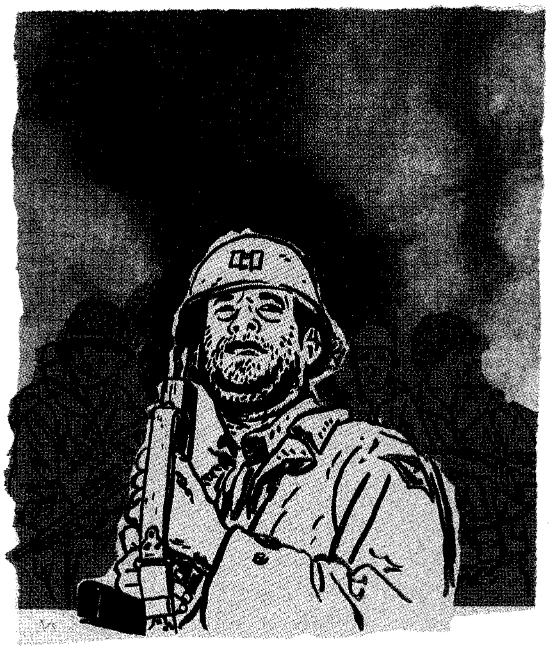
THE CURRENT CINEMA

SOLDIERING ON

War really is hell in Spielberg's "Saving Private Ryan."

BY ANTHONY LANE

THE opening half hour of the new Steven Spielberg picture, "Saving Private Ryan," provides what must be the most telling battle scenes ever made, largely because they tell you almost nothing. They just show. The time is around seven on the morning of June 6, 1944, and Captain John Miller (Tom Hanks) is hunkered down in a landing craft off the Normandy coast. His company of Rangers is poised to go ashore at Dog Green. When the ramp drops, the man at the front takes a bullet through the helmet, and from then on nothing goes according to plan; indeed, it is hard to conceive that there ever was a plan. Those Rangers who are not cut down in the first seconds bundle over the sides of the vessel; those who are not shot or drowned in the water wade and stagger to the sand; and those who are not killed or maimed on the beach, where there is no cover from enemy fire, aim for the seawall at the foot of the bluff. There are not many men at the wall. Miller shouts something at one of them, then turns away; when he turns back, the man has a hole where his face was. Somehow, the survivors must make it to the top of the bluff. Then they can start fighting.



Storming the beach: Tom Hanks, as Captain John Miller, leads a squad of Rangers on a rescue mission.

DAVID MAZZUCCHELLI

One of the many historical sources for "Saving Private Ryan" was Stephen E. Ambrose's oral history of the invasion, "D-Day" (a work so engulfing that it demands to be read in real time, over a long day). You can't help noticing the wry lament that surfaces in veterans' recollections: the one thing to which D Day bore no resemblance whatsoever, they insist, was a movie. According to Private Jack Keating, who fought with A Company of the 2nd Rangers, "It's not like in Hollywood. The actors jump into the water and in three seconds they're charging up the beach. Well, it isn't like that." You might say that Spielberg's objective in these opening minutes is to heed that admonition and, if possible, to make a film that doesn't look like a film—or, at least, to arrange his drama so carefully, and with such instinctive fidelity to the illusion of chaos, that people watching it will forget that they are sitting in a movie theatre.

Such dexterity is not unusual for Spielberg—there were times in "Jaws" and "E.T." when he had you riding the rhythms of the picture with a kind of oblivious glee. Watching "Schindler's List," you were never lost in quite the same way; unavoidably, its sense of historical duty weighed heavily on the body of the action. The Omaha Beach sequence, on the other hand, simply throws a barrage of detail at you and

R.S.V.P.
reader service value program

AN INVITATION TO RESPOND DIRECTLY TO
THE NEW YORKER'S ADVERTISERS

automotive

AUDI A4 1.8T. Drive it while you are still lying about where you have been. Not your age. For more information, visit us at http://www.audiusa.com.

MERCURY. For a free brochure featuring the latest innovative vehicles from Mercury, call 1-800-446-8888 or visit http://www.mercuryvehicles.com.

furnishings & accessories

ENDLESS POOLS™. Swim in place against a gentle current adjustable to any speed or ability in a new concept exercise pool that measures only 8' by 15'. For more information, please call 1-800-732-8660 or visit http://www.endlesspools.com.

health care

AMERICAN COLLEGE OF SURGEONS offers a free brochure about retaining your right of Patient Choice, as well as other important information on surgical care. Visit http://www.facs.org.

on-line services

E-NEWS. Look for *The New Yorker* at The Electronic Newsstand on the World Wide Web and browse what is new from our advertisers. http://www.enews.com/magazines/new_ yorker.

travel

AT LARGE TRAVEL NEWSLETTER. Produced by the Marketing Department of *The New Yorker.* Each issue includes the latest news on travel, special promotions and packages, and profiles of exciting destinations. One-year subscription (three issues) for $10 plus a fourth issue for free. To order, call 1-800-759-9838.

ANSWERS TO 8 X 10 CRYPTIC NO. 52

ACROSS
1 C(A)DS
4 (f)LOCK
7 ANIMAL (anag.)
8 MA(DE SU)RE (*used* rev.)
9 EXAM (*m* + *axe* rev.)
11 DIR + TIED (*rid* rev.)
13 ASSAULT (*a salt* hom.)
17 P + LIE
19 HO + THE + ADS
20 (t)OO LONG
21 ALE + C
22 KEEN (hidden)

DOWN
1 CAME + R + A
2 A + JA + X
3 DA(DAIS)M
4 LISZT (*list* hom.)
5 CA(R)VE
6 KLEE (*clay* hom.)
10 P(ILL)AGE
12 DOE +S IN
14 S + POOL
15 A + D (H)OC
16 WHO + A
18 IDLE (*idol* hom.)

IF UNABLE TO REACH TELEPHONE LISTINGS, SEND REQUESTS, WITH ISSUE DATE NOTED, TO THE NEW YORKER READER SERVICES, 20 WEST 43RD ST., NEW YORK, NY 10036.

980803

© 1998 The New Yorker Magazine, Inc. All Rights Reserved.

leaves you to work it out for yourself. Some hope. Caught between cold water and human beings on fire, this is as credible and confounding a vision of Hell as could be imagined: you see the water lapping red on the sand and (a sight confirmed as authentic by Ambrose's book) an armless man hunting dumbly for his lost limb. It's like high-speed Bosch. Some of the shots are miniature plots, complete with ironic resolution. One soldier feels a round clang off his helmet, which he then removes; dumbfounded, he strokes his untouched scalp, thanking his lucky stars, whereupon another bullet plugs him in the brow. No more stars.

The entire scene is, among other things, a rebuke to the controlling genius of a director like Sam Peckinpah. "The Wild Bunch" and "Cross of Iron," his fine Second World War picture, went for the gut, as does "Saving Private Ryan," but you could never shrug off the suspicion that Peckinpah took pleasure in exploring the wound. Spielberg cuts into violence and away again so swiftly that pleasure is forbidden to leak into the excitement; if nothing else, his film should insure that critics who dote on action movies will stop using the word "balletic" for a while. This is not to deny that Spielberg himself is ceaselessly artful; it's just that his art, at its best, is self-camouflaging. True, there are patches of slow motion in the early scenes of "Saving Private Ryan," but they feel like the opposite of Peckinpah's infamous *tableaux mourants:* we see Miller grind to a crawl and hear the crackle and crump of German fire thicken into a slur of distant thunder. He is in danger of giving up; death is wafting toward him like chloroform, and it takes all his fortitude to shake free and start up again.

Spielberg had Janusz Kaminski, his cameraman on "Saving Private Ryan," remove the coating from the lenses, so that the light grows dour and diffuse: think of Robert Capa's smudgy Omaha stills pasted together into a strip of film, and you'll get some idea. The colors of skin, soil, and uniform are as flat and drained as those on the translucent Stars and Stripes with which the film begins and ends. Best of all, Kaminski switches shutters in such a way that every activity gets a slight but infectious touch of the jitters. It is curious, to say the least, to watch a nineties film and catch a whiff of the panic and panache that used to litter silent movies. The first half hour of "Saving Private Ryan" is almost all noise, but none of it is dialogue. Those lines that do make it through are as basic as pre-talkie titles: "I'll see you on the beach," "Anywhere but here," and the straightforward radio communication "We do not hold the beach."

Once Miller and his men have taken and held their allotted territory, the camera wanders through the bodies left behind and comes upon a corpse face down at the sea's edge, with his name on the back of his pack: Ryan S. We now have a story on our hands. We know we have been watching a film—we have seen Tom Hanks going for broke, assisted by the formidable Tom Sizemore as his loyal sergeant, with whom he fought in Italy—but we have been sucked into the sheer plotlessness of the piece. The movie has been as crazed, and as scornful of expectations, as D Day was to the Rangers themselves; now, like them, it has to pick itself up and do a prearranged job. You know that Spielberg has no option, but, even as the traditional thrusts of cinema (suspense, comic relief, character development) kick in, you can't suppress a twinge of disappointment. What would a movie consisting of nothing but close combat, of mess and fear and wordlessness, have felt like? Unwatchable, I guess. Now we will never know.

To be fair, I would prefer to have Spielberg follow a one-off mission than to sit through one of those character-packed but soulless epics that used to be thought appropriate for war; "The Longest Day" needed four directors and looked as if none of them had shown up. Spielberg concentrates on Miller and a group of men who, aided by the whey-faced interpreter Corporal Upham (Jeremy Davies), learn that Ryan was one of three brothers killed in action in various theatres of war; Mrs. Ryan received all three telegrams of notification on the same day. (This Sophoclean horror was actually perpetrated on the Niland family: half a paragraph of Ambrose's book provides the meat of Spielberg's movie.) The sole surviving brother, James Francis Ryan, dropped into France with the 101st Airborne; now he is somewhere in Normandy, and Miller's team, on the orders of George Marshall himself, has to find him and pull him out. They set off, and we are hauled through a series of wrenching episodes: the hidden sniper, the machine-gun emplacement, the crashed glider. These are, for the most part, staged with verve, but I could have done without some of the downtime—or, at least, without the speeches that fill that time. They are well written, by Robert Rodat, but there's the rub; they sound written, and are nicely placed, whereas so much of "Saving Private Ryan" feels grimly ridiculous or casually happened upon. Miller finally locates Ryan (Matt Damon) when the boy pops up in a field of high grass; the camera glances at him for a second and moves on by.

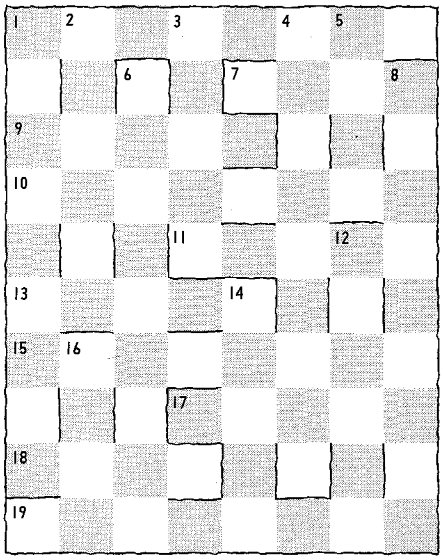
You perk up, in an awful way, as it becomes clear that the men are heading for another hopeless situation. A crucial bridge must be kept open for the Allies, and the Germans, who will get there first, must at all costs be held off. Ryan refuses to leave his post, so the Rangers stay with him and slug it out. In short, the last half hour of the picture is, if not a repeat of the first, at least a return to its air of flabbergasted extremity and reflex courage. Despite Spielberg's avowed intent to darken and coarsen the formulas of the war film, old moviegoing habits die hard: I was practically standing on my seat and yelling at Tom Hanks to kill more Germans, and then, when he had finished killing Germans, to kill more Germans. If anything, the heroism in "Saving Private Ryan" is all the more startling for not being rigged or haloed; it seems to bloom out of the shapeless dreck of fighting like a madman for your life.

This is welcome news; I was nervous about going to see any movie that might make me feel guilty—or, worse still, indifferent—about enjoying "Where Eagles Dare," a work of art I revisit with the devout regularity that others reserve for the bones of saints. Miller's company is shredded on the sands of northern France, whereas Richard Burton took a rockbound Bavarian fortress with the calmness that comes only to those who have previously stormed Elizabeth Taylor; still, I persist in believing that both kinds of picture are admissible, and even mixable. Abandoning the seesaw queasiness that saw him sway between high-fibre projects like "Amistad" and oversalted junk food like "The Lost World," Spielberg has come up with a work that combines both functions—the tighter it grips, the more morally provocative it becomes. He really doesn't need the sappy epilogue, in which one of the survivors revisits the graves of fallen comrades; this is a pilgrimage faithfully undertaken by veterans, but to a moviegoer it feels like arm-twisting, and it blocks the punch of the movie. How could any director knock us out with the Omaha Beach scene and still think that he needs to instruct us in the virtues of selfless conduct, or to woo us with the soaring choirs that wash over the final credits? (John Williams has done great work with Spielberg, but it may be time for an amicable split.) As "Schindler's List" suggested, Spielberg has forgotten how to end his movies; he wraps the action, then starts to preach.

All this is annoying, but it fades fast; if "Saving Private Ryan" has anything to offer the youth of today, it is a lesson in how to stick a mirror on the muzzle of your weapon with chewing gum, so that you can poke it out at an angle and spot the machine gun around the corner. There's a lovely moment when Tom Hanks rubs his mirror before holding it out again; you wonder how he could bother with such nicety in a world brimming with blood and sand, but that is precisely why he does it. Hanks, needless to say, doesn't put a foot wrong in this picture; no other movie star is so at ease in ensemble work, and that sense of fellow-feeling, of inborn democracy, gives you a hold on Captain Miller himself. Hanks gets solid support all around, especially from the ferrety and laconic Barry Pepper as Jackson, the company sharpshooter, who quotes from the Bible as he squeezes the trigger. At the shaken core of the movie is Jeremy Davies as the perplexed young interpreter, Upham. Devoid of combat experience, unable to interpret the lingua franca of mass slaughter, Upham is pitched into a firefight; all our moviegoing experience tells us that he will redeem himself, become a man, and save the day, but the cards don't cut like that. It is the most unromantic suggestion that I have come across in a Spielberg picture, and one of the most honest: heroes are not freshly forged in the furnace of high drama. They are trained, and they are lucky. ♦

8x10 CRYPTIC

NO. 53 BY MONIKA ZOOK



ACROSS

1 Muslim wrapping outside of engine (8)
7 Car's out of control in curves (4)
9 Wild horses heard in city borough (5)
10 Spanish gent interrupts independent Brit (8)
11 Said, "Ick a waxy flower" (5)
13 Starts with pencil fillers (5)
15 Bordering on a mad goat's activity (8)
17 Walked audibly with stick (5)
18 Writer's imitation of a person in conversation (4)
19 Cryptic setter in participation (8)

DOWN

1 Check large antelope in plateau region (9)
2 Thoreau's last writing reached a higher level (6)
3 Give and take with Bee and Mayberry's sheriff (5)
4 European country acquires the man's sports business (9)
5 Long for sea chest's contents (4)
6 Study nothing in an Irish province (9)
8 Oddest pair of saints carrying compass (9)
12 Dialects surrounding love poetry by Pound (6)
14 Celebrity catches one domestic flight (5)
16 Head for back of alehouse in Prohibition (4)

• •

The solution to puzzle No. 52 appears on page 78. For a free copy of "The New Yorker's Guide to Solving Cryptic Crosswords," please send your fax number or a stamped, self-addressed envelope to "Solvers' Guide," The New Yorker, 20 West 43rd Street, New York, N.Y. 10036. For an electronic version, send an E-mail to puzzleguide@newyorker.com.

SHOUTS & MURMURS

DIPLOMATIC IMPUNITY

BY BRUCE McCALL

Dear Accredited Diplomat: Wouldn't it be great if you could enjoy the same fun and freedoms guaranteed by your Diplomatic Driver's License in other activities? Well, now you can. No red tape, no fuss, not even a background check. Hey, you're a diplomat! So whatever you do—come cops or gory mishaps or public outrage—it's carte blanche and you're off scot-free. And our all-new menu of no-questions-asked Diplomatic Licenses lets you do just about anything.

Just check the Diplomatic License or Licenses you want from the list below. Your official plastic-coated wallet-sized license(s) will be rushed to you overnight.

Diplomatic Elevator-Inspector License: Overload. Deface. Smoke. Ring alarm buttons at will. Commandeer elevators for your personal use and order other passengers to scram or take the stairs. Best of all: put a family photo in the elevator's inspection-certificate slot!

Diplomatic Medical License: Botch that brain-surgery procedure and just let 'em try to revoke your license. Or run a liposuction mill and laugh at lawsuits. And remember—you're automatically entitled to a twenty per cent diplomatic discount on all medical supplies!

Diplomatic Arms-Export License: Ship crateloads of AK-47s and boatloads of Sidewinder missiles anywhere in the world—and even if they're defective, U.N. rules say you collect full payment!

Diplomatic Liquor License: Sell watered vodka to underage kids from the trunk of your car right outside any grade school; when the fuzz descends, flash your Diplomatic Liquor License and it's Buds all around!

Diplomatic Boiler-Inspector License: Who hasn't hankered to fiddle with all those knobs and petcocks and gauges behind locked doors down in building basements? No experience needed. And if the super starts meddling, slug him!

Diplomatic Building-Demolition License: Is that eyesore out your kitchen window bugging you? Rather have a river view? With a few sticks of dynamite and your Diplomatic Building-Demolition license, what's going to stand in your way? For that matter, what's going to be left standing?

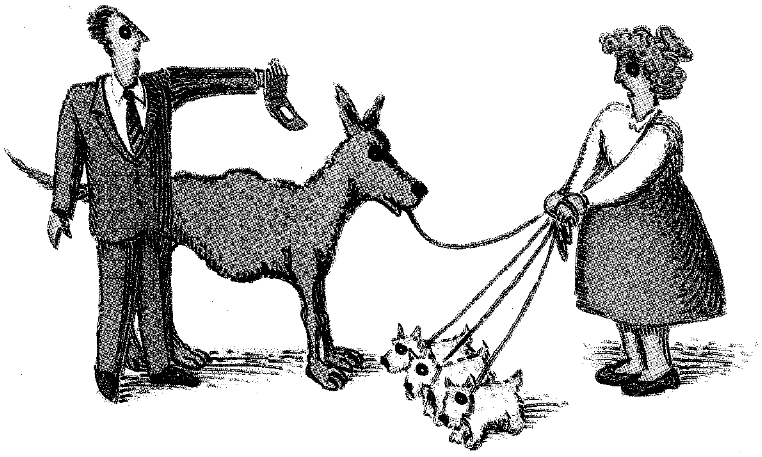
Diplomatic Dog License: License? You don't need no stinkin' license! Leave the leash at home. Let regular citizen-stiffs clean up after Fido. And if your pooch takes a chunk out of somebody else's pesky little Pomeranian, tell 'em, "Take it to the U.N.—and good luck!"

Diplomatic Pilot's License: In a word, whee! Fly a jumbo jet the way you drive your car. And when (and if!) you land, park wherever you want for as long as you want. Worst that can happen is a summons from the World Court at the Hague—but what's another ticket to a working diplomat?

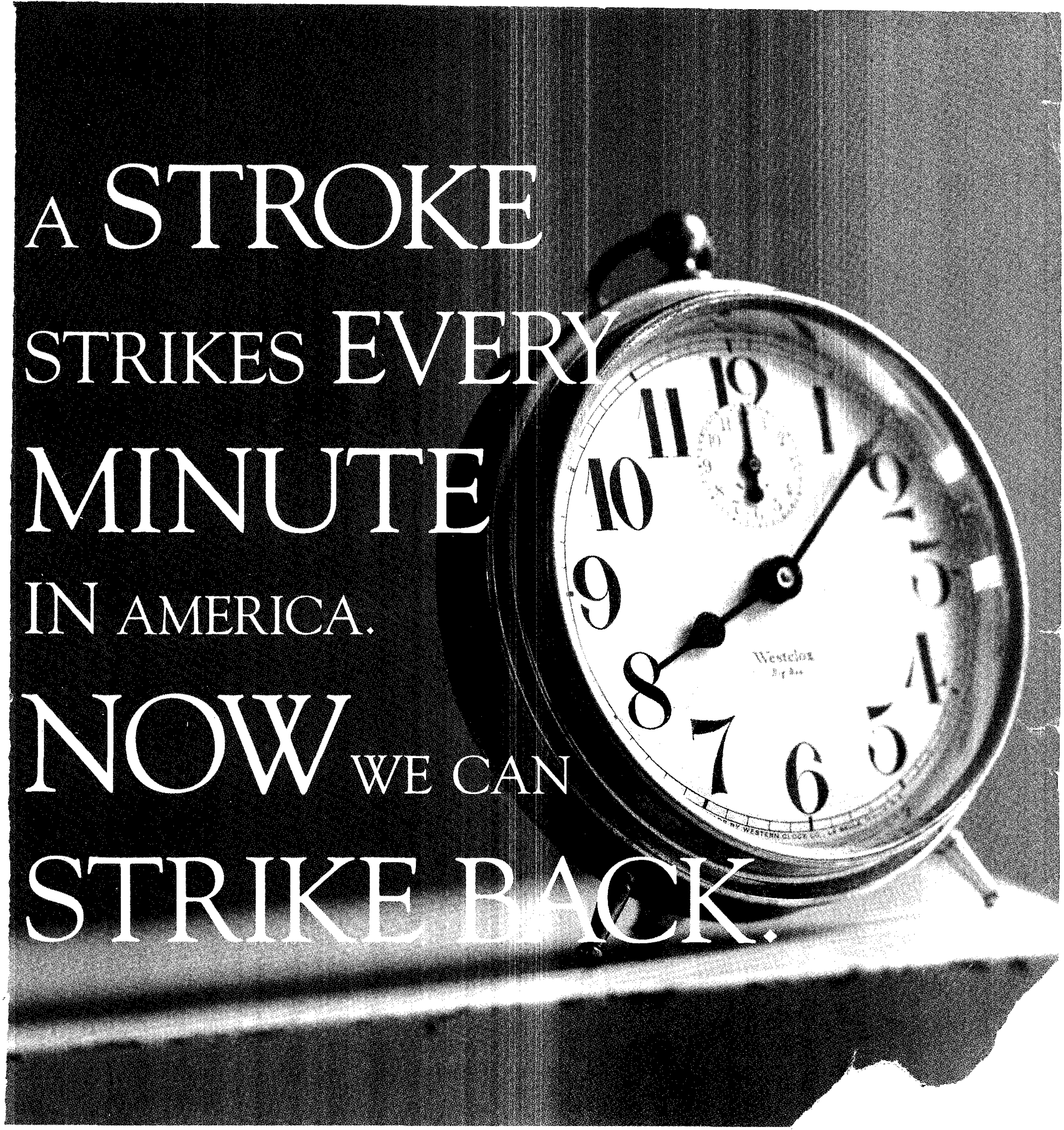
Diplomatic Street Vendor's License: Rat hairs in the hot dogs, anthrax in the falafel—it's all the same citation-proof world when you post that Diplomatic Street Vendor's License on your cart. Burger patties turned rancid? Wow, that helpless city health inspector's about to turn beet-red!

Diplomatic Hunting License: It's your chance to declare open season on anything with legs. Go squirrel-hunting in suburbia; shoot up the neighborhood on Sunday mornings. So what if that ten-point buck you potted turns out to be the mailman? You're covered with that legal eiderdown we call diplomatic immunity!

Diplomatic Lawyer's License: Finally, in the unlikely event that you're ever cornered by some slippery prosecutor bent on making headlines out of a six-car pileup or oil-tanker explosion or other silly fuss, enjoy the power to fight back. File nuisance suits. Invoke attorney-client privilege. Gum up the legal machinery for years to come. Your Diplomatic Lawyer's License comes complete with genuine leather-covered briefcase and a docket of a hundred motions to dismiss. ◆



JOHN O'BRIEN


A STROKE
STRIKES EVERY
MINUTE
IN AMERICA.
NOW WE CAN
STRIKE BACK.
Westclox
BY WESTERN CLOCK CO.

Every year, 700,000 Americans suffer a stroke. Four in five American families are affected. St
cause of death, and the number one cause of adult disabilities such as paralysis, memory lo
Because pharmaceutical company researchers have learned so much about what causes a st
discover revolutionary medicines that can stop a stroke's devastating effects. So the cha
Our researchers are committed to making more strikes against strok

America's Pharmaceutic

Leading the way in

www.searc

AVALON

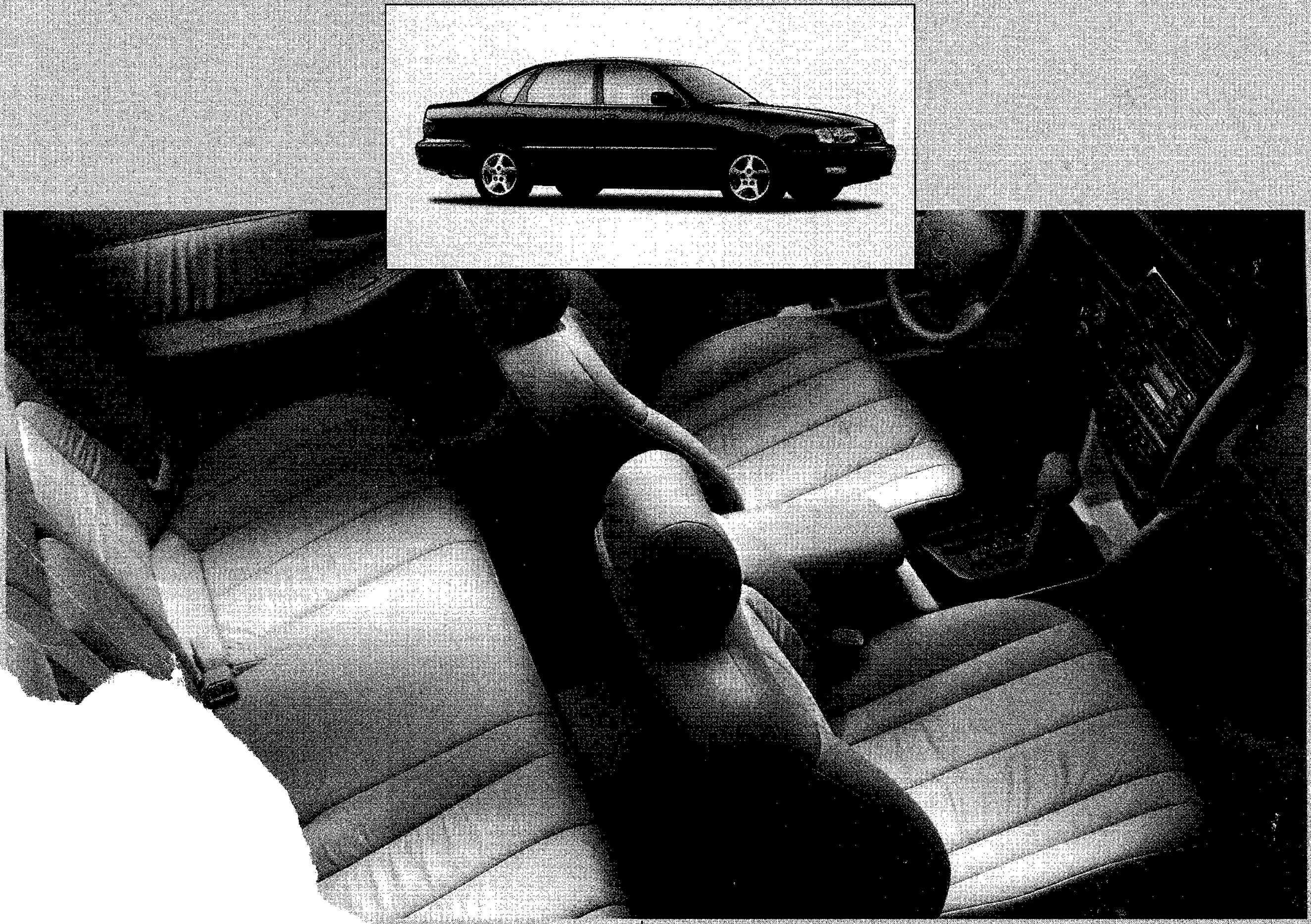
oh, the joys

Settle in. And settle down. Then feel the space around you embrace, comfort and ease both body and soul. Before you

of solitary

know it, your entire being has just breathed a collective sigh of relief. And to think, you have yet to make it halfway home.

confinement.



OYOTA | *everyday*

vww.toyota.com

those who love you. Shown with optional equipment.